

EXILED

An Exciting Story of Armenia



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ILLUSTRATION BY ARTIST

SPERO

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THE AUTHOR

"In Arab dress and with the tattoo marks on my face, I looked like this."

EXILED

Story of an Armenian Girl

by
Serpouhi Tavoukdjian

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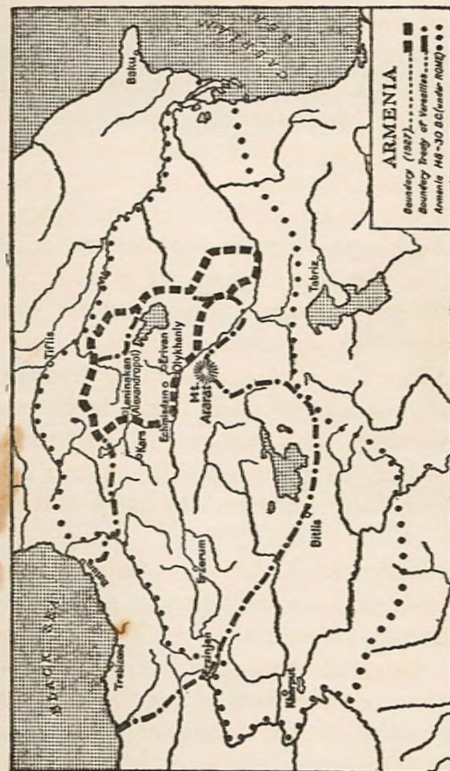


The Ancient Land of Armenag

ARMENIA is my country, though I must acknowledge Turkey as my birthplace. In ancient times Armenia occupied the vast territory in Western Asia between the Black and Caspian Seas, south of the Caucasus Mountains, and east of the Mediterranean. Within its boundaries were the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, also Mt. Ararat, on which the ark rested after the flood. According to tradition this was the site of the Garden of Eden.

But through the years, Armenia has been a mere pawn on the chessboard of the nations. Its fertile lands have been seized as spoil of ruthless warfare or deliberately stolen. Its cities have been ravished, its villages destroyed, and its peaceful, industrious people heartlessly massacred. Today it is only a small land containing about 31,000 square miles, has no seaport, and is financed and controlled by Soviet Russia, though known to the world as the S. S. Republic of Armenia.

Ancient Armenia was the center of one of the oldest



Adapted from Encyclopedia Britannica

The ancient kingdom of Armenia stretched from the Black Sea to the shores of the Caspian. The fragment inclosed in the heavy border is all that now remains, and it is a part of Soviet Russia.

civilizations in the world. Its people were of Aryan race and of pure Caucasian blood. Their origin is lost in the mists of antiquity, but according to their own tradition, they are descendants of Togarmah, a grandson of Japheth, who settled in that locality after the ark came to rest on Mt. Ararat.

This is the way the story goes: About 2,300 years before Christ, Haig, the son of Togarmah, went with the rest of the descendants of Noah to find a new home for himself and his posterity in the country of Shinar. Here the people, for fear of another flood, attempted to build the tower of Babel. Haig and his sons distinguished themselves by their wisdom in planning, and by their diligent work in the building of this tower. But when image or idol worship began to be practiced among their brethren, this was repulsive to them, and therefore they left the plains of Shinar and returned to the home of their nativity, the land around Mt. Ararat.

Belus, the leader in idolatry in Shinar, when he learned that Haig and his large family had withdrawn from his authority, pursued them with a large force of armed men. Haig, hearing of the proposed attack, mustered all the male members of his family who were able to fight and all others who were willing to cast their lot with him, armed them as best he was able, and set out to meet the enemy.

He charged his little army to attack that part of the enemy's force where Belus commanded in person. "For," said he, "if we succeed in discomfiting that part

of the army, the victory is ours. Should we, however, be unsuccessful in our attempt, let us never survive the misery and disgrace of defeat, but rather perish, sword in hand, defending the best and dearest right of reasonable creatures—our liberty."

The battle was joined. After a bloody conflict, Belus fell by an arrow discharged by Haig, and soon his army was dispersed. Thus the Armenians fought their first battle for freedom of conscience. Among their own people, they call themselves after this hero, Haigs (Haiks), and their country Haiasdan (Haya-stan). Haig, when he died, was succeeded by his son, Armenag, and it is thought that the name Armenia came from this prince.

In the earliest days of recorded history, the Armenians occupied this same territory. Xenophon describes their manners and customs. The Bible mentions that the sons of Sennacherib escaped "into the land of Armenia." Ezekiel also refers to the land of Armenia under the name of Togarmah, as furnishing Tyre with horses and mules. And the "kingdoms of Ararat" were among the nations summoned by Jeremiah to aid in the destruction of Babylon.

Tradition says that Christianity was preached in Armenia early in the first century by the apostles Thad-dæus and Bartholomew; also that their king Abgar held communication with Jesus Christ. But it is a historic fact that in 303 A. D. their king, Tridates, and the whole nation became known as Christian under the preaching of St. Gregory, called "The Illuminator."

The Armenian Church is thus one of the oldest Christian churches in the world.

As a Christian nation surrounded by heathen nations, the Armenians have for twenty centuries been almost constantly under persecution—in earliest days from the Persian fire worshipers and in later days from the Mohammedans. Their country has been invaded successively by the caliphs of Baghdad, the sultans of Egypt, the khans of Tartary, the shahs of Persia, and the Ottoman Turks. All these invasions have been accompanied by fierce persecution and great suffering. But the Armenian people have held tenaciously to their Christian faith even to the present time.

In the middle of the fifth century, Armenia lost her independence, and came under the rule of feudal chiefs who were subject to the king of Persia. At this time the Persians were planning the conquest and conversion of the whole world to their religion, and so the Persian king sent a letter to the Armenian princes, setting forth the excellence of fire worship and the foolishness of Christianity, and ordering the Armenians to give up Christianity and engage in fire worship.

A great council of bishops and laymen of the church was held, and a reply of refusal was drafted and unanimously adopted. Eghiche, an Armenian historian who wrote in the fifth century and one of the bishops who signed the refusal, has kept alive for us the text of this remarkable document.

After answering at some length the arguments of the Persian king against Christianity, they said in con-

clusion: "From this faith no one can move us—neither angels nor men; neither sword, nor fire, nor water, nor any deadly punishment. If you leave us our faith, we will accept no other lord in place of you; but we will accept no God in place of Jesus Christ; there is no other God beside Him. If, after this great confession, you ask anything more of us, lo, we are before you and our lives are in your power. From you, torments; from us, submission; your sword, our necks. We are not better than those who have gone before us who gave up their goods and their lives for this testimony."

The king of Persia was amazed and enraged at the boldness of this reply, for Armenia was a small country in population, and stood alone without allies against the great power of Persia. A Persian army of 200,000 was promptly sent into Armenia to subdue it. The battle was joined on the plain of Avarair, under Mt. Ararat. Soon the small Armenian force was defeated, and their leader, Vartan, killed.

But the obstinate resistance offered by the Christians—men, women, and children alike—convinced the king of Persia that he could never make fire worshipers out of the Armenians. As the old historian quaintly expresses it: "The swords of the slayers grew dull, but their necks were not weary." Even the high priest of fire saw that the Persians had undertaken an impossibility, and thus advised the king: "These people have put on Christianity, not like a garment, but like their flesh and blood. Men who do not dread fetters, nor

fear torments, nor care for their property, and, what is worst of all, who choose death rather than life—who can stand against them?"

So the scroll of the centuries unrolled, and my people lived and suffered and died for their faith during the troubled years. Then came the worst scourge of all, the conquering sword of Mohammedanism, wielded by the hand of the heartless, bloodthirsty Turk.

At first it was the Turkish plan to absorb subject peoples by intermarriage, and thus take the world for themselves—and Allah and Mohammed. But the Armenians refused to submit to this program. Though their conquerors took their strongest young men for soldiers in their armies and as husbands for Turkish girls, and though they took their fairest daughters into Turkish harems, they found to their dismay that an Armenian was a Christian no matter in what environment, and a Moslem they simply could not make out of him. But the Turks were persistent. As we read the history of those bloodstained years, it seems that humanity could not endure what the Armenians endured. They could be killed, but they could not be coerced in matters of conscience.

Then the fires of persecution burned low for a time. My people are a thrifty, hardy, ambitious race. In the highlands, which were their home, they were farmers, and owned great herds of cattle, sheep, and horses. Also, they had much ability in business lines, and many of them came to the towns and cities, and thus by degrees they spread over a large part of the Turkish

Empire until most of the towns in Turkey had a progressive and peaceful quota of Armenian citizens. They were tolerated by their Mohammedan neighbors, and though, of course, they had no political influence, they were really powerful in that the trade and commerce of inland Turkey were largely in their hands. Wherever they went, they established their schools, and many of their brightest young people became leaders in the professions—lawyers, doctors, and teachers.

True, they were not allowed to carry arms except when conscripted for service in the Ottoman army, but many of them were released from this service by the payment of exemption money, and as a people they strictly confined themselves to the arts of peace.

There came to the Turkish throne in 1876 Abdul Hamid. To this cruel ruler belongs the credit of forming for Turkey a new policy in dealing with her subject peoples. He proposed to strengthen Turkish supremacy, not by seeking to draw into the nation the manhood of the conquered race, but by utterly destroying that manhood. However, he faced a strange situation. The Turks made up only forty per cent of the population of the Turkish Empire. Could they hope to cope successfully with such a situation? By the help of Allah and Mohammed, yes! But they must hold a firm hand. Of all his subjects, the Armenians were by far the most progressive, industrious, and capable. Therefore Abdul reasoned that they were his greatest menace, and against them he gave his first order for annihilation.

The instruments he used to work out his purpose were the Kurds, a turbulent shepherd race of nomads. Thus his own skirts would be clear, and he could say that the massacres were merely local disturbances—revolts by the Armenians against the government, which must be put down. However, he armed the Kurds with modern rifles and arranged for them to receive some instruction in military tactics. Their task was to murder the Armenians; their pay was the privilege of raping their girls and women and robbing the homes and shops of the men they killed.

The Armenians resisted at first and with some success. But Abdul Hamid re-enforced the Kurds with regular troops, and caused it to be proclaimed that this was "a holy war," a war of the Moslem against the cursed infidel. Then Moslem fanaticism, ever smoldering, burst into flame and blazed high. Massacres broke out against the Armenians in the east, west, north, and south of the empire. The streets of Constantinople ran red with their blood before the protest of civilized peoples and governments of the world compelled the heartless ruler to call a halt.

But by that time the Armenian race had been so depleted that even this zealous guardian of Islam admitted that they could not conceivably again menace the Ottoman power for at least a generation. Perforce the "holy war" was over. But the work of extermination still went on quietly in outlying districts, where the news did not leak out to a protesting world.

After a reign of thirty-two years, Abdul Hamid was

deposed in 1908 by a military group in Constantinople calling themselves the Young Turk Party. They shut him up in Salonika, there to spend the remainder of his infamous days, and proclaimed a liberal program of reformation throughout the harassed country. This gained them the sympathy and help of Europe. But in time their so-called reforms relapsed into a resuming of the old policy toward their subject peoples.

Their watchword became, "Ottomanize! Ottomanize! Ottomanize! Turkey for the Turk!" With them was born the inhuman "deportation" scheme for the purpose of eliminating the Christians of their territory who could not be safely massacred under the watchful eye of Europe. They would put the non-Turkish population unceremoniously over the frontier somewhere—anywhere—and lay Moslem hands upon their property.

But this policy was not put into actual operation to any great extent until June and July of 1915, shortly after Turkey entered the World War on the side of Germany. This, of course, resulted in the declaration of war against her by the Allied nations, and thus was removed the restraining hand that had, in a measure, especially in the centers of population, kept the Armenian people from outright massacre.

And so the deportations began. It is my experience during this sad time of which I wish to tell you. But before beginning the story, I will ask you to keep in mind throughout its telling three things:

First, that the Armenians were driven from their

homes and killed, not because they had broken laws or rebelled against the government or done anything wrong, but simply because they were Christians and refused to deny Christ and accept Mohammedanism, the religion of the Turk.

Second, that the Moslem has a background of intense and centuries-old hatred for all "infidels," as he calls those who follow Christ. He believes he can do no better deed, nor greater service to his Allah and to his Mohammed, than to kill these infidels. Such an act is not murder in his code, but a real deed of honor and religious zeal.

Third, that in my heart, where the hurt lies buried deep, there is neither hatred nor resentment toward those who mistreated me. Their religion teaches them to hate me, to make me suffer, to take my life. I pity them. My religion teaches me to forgive unkindness, and to requite it with kindness and service. I hope to return to Turkey someday and demonstrate by my daily walk among her people, and by ministry to her sick and suffering, the loving mercies of a Saviour who died that all men might live.

A Happy Armenian Home

MY father's name was Aaron Tavoukdjian. Years before his birth, the family, following the custom of many of their countrymen, left the old Armenian country, and made for themselves a new home in Turkish territory. They settled in Ovajik, a small town near the city of Ismid. There my father was born, and has spent the most of his life.

Grown to young manhood, he married. My parents had but little of this world's goods when they started out to make their new home. But true to his native instinct for thrift, my father, in due time, overcame this handicap. His method was unique and interesting. As he bought for his own household, he put by something each week which could be used in stocking a tiny retail store someday. This week it would be a bag of beans, next week a sack of flour, next a sack of sugar, and so the supply grew. Finally the long-planned-for store became a reality, and the young man an independent merchant. How proud he and mother were of their business! Prosperity smiled upon their diligent efforts. Other lines of merchandise were added, and in a few years he discontinued the grocery department and dealt in dry goods only. He continued to have success, and as time passed, acquired no mean fortune.

Seven children were born to Aaron and Margaret

Tavoukdjian. One sister died in infancy, but the six of us, in order of our ages, were, Miriam, Lazarus, Ahavne, Rebecca, Serpouhi, and Arasig. Armenians are, as a rule, a dark-complexioned people, but my mother was quite fair. She had black hair and hazel eyes. My brother Lazarus was the only one of the children who resembled her. The rest of us were typical brunettes, like my father.

We had a very happy Seventh-day Adventist home. Z. Baharian, whom the Turks afterward killed for his faith, brought my parents the good news of the third angel's message soon after their marriage, and they heard and accepted it with great joy. Father, with the courage of his convictions, at once closed his store on the seventh day of the week, since he believed this to be the true Sabbath. The result was a series of persecutions. First his patrons refused to buy from him. Then they stoned his store. But he went quietly on his way, and soon those who had mocked at his religion came back to trade and brought with them other customers, so that his business increased marvelously.

As his fortune grew, father did more and more to help and bless the lives of others. Many a homeless child was clothed and fed and sheltered and sent to school at his expense. Many a destitute widow shared his bounties, and also he gave liberally to the work of the church which he loved with all his heart.

Our home life was ideal. The discipline, though strict, was not made irksome. We children were taught to be obedient and helpful. Each had his own par-

ticular household tasks. The rough work, however, was done by servants who came in each day. And how devotedly we loved and respected our parents, even though they believed in the now old-fashioned doctrine, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," even though, when we did not give heed to their commands, punishment descended swift and sure. But usually it was a pleasure to obey, and we children seldom quarreled among ourselves, because we knew that this brought to our parents much grief.

Father and mother were strong believers in education, and so we went regularly to school. This was a school for Armenian children only, and some of our neighbors and friends could not afford the tuition for their boys and girls, so father often paid for them.

We lived in a large, three-story house. In the basement were stored the goods that my father sold in the store, which occupied the ground floor. Upstairs were our living rooms, and they were filled with beautiful things, and very comfortably furnished in harmony with the customs of the country. Heavy Oriental rugs covered the hardwood floors, and many gay, downy, handmade cushions were scattered in piles over the floor and on padded benches built along the walls. These took the place of chairs for us.

Before we entered the living quarters, we must always stop in the entry and remove our shoes and put on our house slippers. Shoes and slippers were kept in a neat row in this hall, so that each member of the family could easily find his or her own. On the walls were

bright pictures, and hanging lamps swung from the ceilings to give us light at night. We used charcoal burners for heat in mildly cold weather, and wood stoves in winter.

The third floor of our home was put to a very unusual use. Its four large rooms were given over to the silkworm industry. There my father kept his silkworms, and there a man, especially hired for this work, fed them on mulberry leaves, while they spun their fine cocoons. These were sold to silk-goods manufacturers, and proved a source of considerable revenue.

Just outside the town of Ovajik, where we lived, my father owned many acres of land, where were vineyards and orchards and rich farms, which men worked on shares. I remember the abundance of fresh vegetables and delicious fruits brought in from the gardens to supply our family table. Nothing, however, went to waste. What we could not use was given to the poor.

Among the most vivid of my memories of those peaceful, happy days are the recollections of morning and evening family worship, and also sunset worship on Friday evening. This last was a special time. Usually friends and neighbors joined us, and we gathered around my sister Rebecca as she played the accordion, and sang the best-loved old Christian hymns, and talked about the time when Jesus would come and take those who are faithful home to heaven.

We did not have a church building in Ovajik, but our little company of about fifty Seventh-day Advent-

ists met in a rented hall for Sabbath services. In the afternoon, father would take us children out into the orchards and vineyards, and as we walked and picked the flowers and fruits, he talked to us of many things. If he could have pushed back the veil that hid the years and looked into the future, he could not have better prepared us to "stand like the brave" through the hard experiences which were in store.

As I have said, we were seven children in all. One sister had died at the age of two years, so I never saw her. But another came into our family circle, and became a part of it—a young Armenian who was an officer in the Turkish army. He loved my sister Miriam, and became engaged to marry her. Shortly after their engagement, she was taken ill.

How we all loved this tall, beautiful, eldest sister! She was a devoted Christian. All that untiring, loving care and medical skill could do was done to restore her health, but she grew more pale and weak from day to day, and finally fell asleep in Jesus. Her last words were, "Do not cry, mother, father. I die, but in the resurrection morning I shall live again."

With this blessed hope she left us heartbroken, yet comforted. Could we have known then what suffering and terror were just ahead for our people and ourselves, we would have rejoiced at her escape from things which beggar description. But we did not know.

After Miriam died, the young officer, who had waited for her for several years, hoping against hope for her

recovery, often came to visit us. We loved him as one of our own, and he returned the regard.

Time is a wonderful healer, and as the days and weeks and months sped by on winged feet, our sorrow became hope, and life settled back again into the old quiet, peaceful, happy routine of worship and work and play and study.

War—and the Death March

AND then there dawned a day! Like a thunderbolt from a clear, blue, sunny sky came Turkey's entrance into the World War as an ally of Germany, and the official declaration from the government at Constantinople that she would now entirely clear her possessions of that hated Christian race, the Armenians.

The first we knew of trouble was when a proclamation was made by the town crier in the streets of Ovajik, calling all the chief men of the town to meet in the schoolhouse. When they arrived there, they were received by Turkish officers, who told them of the declaration of war, and announced that all able-bodied men between the ages of twenty and forty-five years were to be mustered into the Turkish army for immediate service. They were also told that their families would have four days—and only four—to prepare clothes and food for a long journey. The soldiers made them understand that this would be a final leave-taking of home—a final parting from loved ones. Then the men were beaten by the Turks as proof of their servitude, after which they were allowed twenty-four hours of freedom to make any necessary arrangements and take leave of their families.

My father was one of those called to the schoolhouse. When he came home and told us the startling news, we were very sad and bewildered, and hardly knew

what to do. But we did know that we were in the hands of a ruthless foe, and could expect no mercy.

The Jews were not forced to leave their homes as we were. Ishmael and Isaac were half brothers, you remember, and the relationship is still respected.

The time came for father to leave us. It was heart-breaking. He gathered us in our cozy living room for a last prayer together. Earnestly he pleaded with the all-wise and loving heavenly Father to watch over his dear ones and spare their lives if it were His will, but above all else to keep them true and faithful to Him and to the right, come what might.

And we, while we could not speak for tears, breathed a prayer for him, and begged for his protection as he went out to the battle front. He said a tender farewell to each of us, and dried our tears, reminding us that if we did not meet again in this world, we must gather as a united family in the earth made new. There was not time for more. We all followed him to the door, and watched while he mounted a horse and rode away to the Turkish barracks. We were alone! He was gone!

I was only a little girl ten years old, but how vividly I remember those four sad days of preparation. My mother was ill from grief and sorrow, and my sisters sewed frantically on garments which we would wear on our long journey. Into the seams of the wide bloomers we were to wear they sewed money and our few precious pieces of jewelry, which might be bartered along the wayside for food when the little supply we could carry was gone.

The Turkish soldiers, and also civilians, were going through Armenian homes, ostensibly searching for firearms and weapons and evidences of rebellion against the government, but really they were robbing of us whatever they wished to take. They carried many bolts of rich silks and cloth out of my father's store before our eyes, and they also took the stock and wrecked the toy store of my brother Lazarus, some distance away from our home. This father had given him on his recent eighteenth birthday, so that he might have his own business.

What should we take with us? Frantically we ran about the dear, familiar rooms we were soon to leave. Only that which we could carry in our hands would be allowed. What would be most valuable? Should we take this, and leave that? No! No! Here was something that really *must* go! In the last hours my sisters made a small tent of light, waterproof cloth. My brother Lazarus rolled this, and when we began our long march he strapped it to his back. Arasig and I made a careful selection of toys to be taken, and packed them over and over again, but at the last moment they were all left.

The four days of grace were gone! We dressed ourselves in double clothes. I think my mother wore even three dresses. We wrapped as much valuable goods around our bodies as we dared. And each of us carried as large a bundle as we could manage. Our food was made ready and packed. All was confusion.

Then came the last hour! The last moment! The

Turkish soldiers on horses, with their guns and long knives ready for business, told us we must start, and saw that we started! Where? We did not know, and we dared not question. There was hardly time for a farewell look at the dearly loved home. Frightened, sorrowful, bewildered, we were driven out and joined hundreds, thousands of our countrymen who were as frightened, as sorrowful, as bewildered as ourselves.

Because we had money to pay our way, the Turks allowed us and others who had money, to make the first lap of this dread journey by train. In a Pullman? In a day coach? No, indeed. We were herded into side-entrance box cars. So many were packed into each car, however, that there was hardly room to sit down. They were very particular that we have no comfort, but we were glad for even this concession, as my mother was hardly able to walk.

During that first night, the train stopped at a station, and the doors of our car were opened. Somehow—we do not know how it could happen, but it did—most of our bundles were stolen. I had left only a little baby doll and a fork which I had in my hands. These I carried all through that long, long march to its end.

I remember particularly that we passed through the cities of Eskishehr and Konieh on the train, though the soldiers compelled us to walk some of the way between.

But train travel even in box cars was expensive. The Turkish soldiers came and searched us for valuables. They looked even in our hair, and took whatever they

found. So at last when we came to Adana our money was gone, and we were forced to join the hundreds of thousands of Armenians who were walking, walking, walking! We did not march in one great company. The route we were to follow was marked out by the Turks, then we were divided into groups of perhaps a thousand persons. Each group had a strong mounted guard. And group by group we were urged forward at the point of knives and guns. Where? Oh, yes, we knew now. Our persecutors took pleasure in telling us that we were being driven to the Arabian Desert, where all who did not die along the way would be killed. The Armenian race was to be exterminated for all time.

Only God in heaven, who looked down upon that pitiful death march, and permitted it, we are sure, for some good purpose, knows how far we walked. Day and night, with little or no rest, we were kept moving. We also had very little to eat now, and were suffering from hunger and thirst as well as from fatigue. Instead of permitting us to walk in the road, which was fairly smooth, the soldiers forced us to keep to the side of the highway, where it was rough and stony, and the path very narrow. Uphill, downhill! It seemed that there was no pity or humanity in the hearts of our captors.

If we passed through Turkish villages, the people would shout that we were "pigs," and stone us. Neither would they sell us food nor allow us water to drink from their wells. If we passed through Armenian villages, where the deportation order had not yet



"Only God in heaven, who looked down upon that pitiful death march, knows how far we walked."

reached, we were so closely guarded that it was almost impossible to communicate with those who were our friends, and would gladly have relieved our suffering had they been allowed.

Sometimes we were ordered to rest, but we were no sooner down on the welcome ground than the order to "march on" would boom out, and if we did not move promptly, a knife point or a gun urged us to greater haste. Often our guards beat us with straps they carried. How we prayed for deliverance or death!

As we trudged along our weary way, in the daylight hours the Turkish guards kept close watch of the pretty girls, and when night came, marked the places where they camped to rest. Then in the darkness they would slip quietly to where they were sleeping to carry them away into the hills. Sometimes they would be released and come creeping back through the gray dawn, pitiful shamed wrecks of innocent girlhood, only to have the experience repeated again the next night. Sometimes we never saw them again. As terrified screams of these helpless victims filled our ears, our blood ran cold, and we prayed that God would protect our virtue and save us from their fate. Beauty was nothing to be desired then. Comely girls blackened their faces and made themselves as hideous as possible. This ruse saved many.

As the march lengthened, many committed suicide. Mothers went crazy and threw their children into the river to end their sufferings.

As we passed through Turkish villages, the men

would come out and look us over. If a girl caught the fancy of one of them, he would not hesitate to seize her for his harem. But sometimes he could not succeed in stealing the girl of his choice. Then he offered money for her. The Turks were willing to buy Armenian girls for wives, and the girls were often glad for this opportunity to escape from the almost unspeakable suffering they were enduring. Also the few coins with which such a bargain was sealed helped to buy a bit of food for the starving family.

One day we stopped to encamp near the town of Bahub, and while there I went to the bazaar with my sisters. A Turkish soldier riding by on his horse asked my sister if he could buy me. My sister said, "No." But he was very persistent. As we mingled with the crowd, sister said, "Here's a good chance to run away from him, and get to a tent." But he must have been watching closely, for he followed us. I ran into the first tent that was convenient; I did not know whose it was. But it happened to be my cousin's.

I was crying. I told my cousin the soldier was coming to get me. She glanced out and saw him. Then she piled a heap of quilts over me and went outside as though she knew nothing about the matter. The soldier did not find me, and when he had gone I again joined my mother and sisters on the long march.

One morning as we were dragging ourselves along the stony road, we suddenly came face to face with another army—Arabs on their way to join Mustafa Kemal Pasha. They wore few clothes and had long

hair hanging to their shoulders. They looked even more fierce and dangerous than the Turks, and we were afraid of them. All of us children gathered close to mother, and she held tightly to my hand as they passed down one side of the road and we stumbled over the ruts and stones up the other side.

Childlike, I stared at these strange men with wild, frightened eyes, and suddenly one of them caught my other hand and pulled me away from mother and started to run, dragging me along. I began to scream with all my might, and succeeded in making so much commotion that several of the Armenian men in our company joined my mother in pursuit, and I was rescued. Mother dried my tears and held me close to still the wild beating of my heart the best she could with the guard hurrying us back into the exile line. She had been sick when we started, and now she was growing very weak from lack of food.

This pitiful caravan of despairing human beings, of which we were a part, stretched out for miles and miles over the valleys and plains and hills and mountains of Turkey and northern Syria. It was truly a march of death. Hundreds, yes, thousands dropped out of the line, so weakened by starvation that to take another step was impossible, and they were left by the roadside to die alone. The sick and the aged people and the wee children fell also by the roadside and did not rise again. For when the deportation orders came to a city or town or hamlet, they were explicit and detailed. *Every Armenian* must be ready to leave at a certain hour

of a certain day for an unknown destination. *There were no exceptions.* Hunger, thirst, sickness, death, stalked at our side, each eager to take its toll of the helpless exiles.

In the Throes of Starvation

STARVATION is a dreadful thing! We heard of some who turned cannibal and ate human flesh. One day when I begged for food, mother said to me, "Serpouhi, will you ever complain of dry bread if we get home and have food again?" And I cried out in my hunger, "Oh, no, mother, never! I will never complain of *anything* ever again!"

Walking day and night, without food or drink, my whole family became sick, with the exception of myself. We had eaten hardly anything but grass for days. My older brother, Lazarus, and my two sisters, Ahavne and Rebecca, were so sick they could hardly go on, and it seemed that each step must be their last. But urged by oaths and bayonet points and gun butts and frequent beatings, they managed somehow to crawl along.

One night when our guards allowed us to stop for a little rest, we all dropped down by the roadside. We knew the respite would be short. Mother rose from the ground, and tears streamed down her cheeks as she did what she could to ease our sufferings.

I was lying on a great rock, with my face turned up to the stars, and there I talked over our great trouble with my heavenly Father. He alone could help us in our distress. I spoke out loud to Him, and then trusted Him to answer as He saw best. But still I could not sleep. So I repeated Bible verses which father had

taught us to know and love. Most prominent among those I remember were: "All things work together for good to them that love God," and, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

Before daylight dawned, the dreaded signal to march came. Neither Lazarus nor my sisters could stand, so we hurriedly gathered a few of our belongings and slipped out of sight in the darkness. We would join the group of our countrymen that would be stopping there the next night, and thus have a day of rest. Arasig and I gathered some grass to eat, but we were careful to keep hidden behind the rocks so that no chance Turk passing by would see us. We knew that would mean more trouble, and probably death.

As evening brought other refugees, I, the only one who was able, slipped out of our little tent and around our rock shelter, and into the crowd to listen and carry back to mother whatever news I could gather from the camp talk. While I was listening, I saw one of the Turkish guards peel an orange and throw the peeling on the ground. I made one dive and grabbed it, and hurried back to my dear sick ones.

Brother Lazarus was lying so still on the bare earth. He did not answer when I spoke to him, so I ran to his side and said, "See, brother, what I have brought for you to eat." Still he did not move nor answer nor make any sound. His eyes were closed. I tried to open them, but could not. I tried to open his mouth, but his teeth were tightly shut. I could not understand

what had happened to this jolly big brother, who had always been so loving and kind to me. I turned to mother and asked, "Why doesn't Lazarus speak to me?" She came close to us then, and her eyes were wet with tears as she took my hand and stroked it and said, "My dear Serpouhi, brother is dead—starved!" We knelt and prayed beside him, my mother, Arasig, and I—the girls were too sick to move—prayed that we who were still alive might be faithful, even as he had been, and meet this dear one again in a better, happier, fairer land than this.

Then mother called in some of our camp neighbors, and they helped us to carry his body out into a near-by field, where they placed it in a shallow hole, with his limbs bent, just as he had died, and covered it over with stones. He was just a few months past eighteen! I sobbed my heart out there beside his pitiful grave. Mother finally took me away, and we left our beloved Lazarus alone among those wild, wind-swept, rocky foothills—yet not alone, for does not our heavenly Father keep watch over His faithful children, living or dead?

Very early in the morning we were ordered to march again. Because we did not move fast enough, the Turkish guards came and pulled up the stakes and let our tent down, and shouted at us to "Hurry, hurry!" Mother spoke to them and told them that my sisters were not able to raise their heads as they lay there on the ground, to say nothing of marching. She begged a little respite for them. Could we not please stay there a little longer—another day?

The Turk in charge was a big, burly, hard man. Mother's plea did not interest him at all. What were two dying Armenian girls among all those thousands? His fierce-looking face flushed, and his big mustache, twisted to long points at the ends, fairly bristled. He raised his hand and struck my mother. This was too much for me, and I ran to him crying, "Oh, please, please, do not strike my mother! She is so good." But he paid no attention to me, and struck her again, as he spoke an oath. It was his privilege to beat us and abuse us if he chose, and he did. Why not? The more of these Armenian "pigs" who died from starvation and abuse along the way, the fewer there would be to murder outright at the journey's end.

Poor mother gathered our few belongings, weak and sick as she was. We rolled up the tent, and now that Lazarus was gone my little brother undertook to carry this heavy load so that we might have shelter.

But my sisters could not stand up. They were too weak. It was impossible. And still it seemed that we just *could not* leave them and continue alone. I ran out to look around for help. But everyone was busy with his own troubles. Others on every side were as sick as Ahavne and Rebecca. Others everywhere were dying. Many were already dead, and there was no time permitted to bury them. No one would listen to me. And then, at last, I heard someone mention carriages that would carry those who were sickest and could not walk. This humane aid did not come from the Turks, but from others. Among the few Ar-



"I ran to him crying, 'Oh, please, please, do not strike my mother! She is so good.' But he paid no attention to me, and struck her again, as he spoke an oath."

menians who renounced their Christianity and accepted Mohammendanism in order to save their lives, were rich merchants, some millionaires. Their hearts were touched by the sufferings of their fellow countrymen, and they were able to arrange to give them this help.

I rushed back to mother and told her. Then we went and found the carriages. And when those in charge heard our story, they tenderly lifted my two sick sisters in, one at a time, and drove on out of sight with our precious ones. Of course, we could not walk fast enough to keep up with the carriages. In fact, mother could hardly walk at all. I had really to *pull* her forward, step by step, as I walked backward, facing her and holding both her hands. We were in fear and suspense for the safety of the girls, but no mercy was shown us, save that which came from the hand of God.

We walked, and walked, and walked, through sunshine and rain, through heat and cold. Two days passed, and we had not caught up to them. Weary and starved and thirsty, we prayed for rest, no matter how.

My foster brother, the young man who had been betrothed to my sister Miriam, and who seemed like one of our family, was also in the caravan. He had been for a long time an officer in the Turkish army, but when the deportation started, and he learned that his two sisters were among the exiles, he felt that he must be with them and help them as he could. Also he was very anxious to see my sister Ahavne, to whom he was now engaged to be married. He therefore ran

away from the army, and escaped capture and punishment by joining us on the march. He was now sick from long starvation, and after Rebecca died, we were separated and did not see him again. We found his sisters a long time afterward, and they told us he died from hunger.

As we journeyed through the night, we heard voices at the side of the road in the darkness, speaking the dear familiar words of our own tongue. These Armenians had a tent, and invited us to stay with them until the morning. This we were glad to do. We hoped that we could snatch a little rest, and join the long line again before our Turkish guards missed us. It rained very hard just after we stopped, and our clothing was soaked, because the tent was small, and there were many people, and we could hardly get inside. Morning came, and when the sun arose, we tried to dry out, but the wind was cold, and how we shivered!

The people who had asked us in were preparing a little food. For the first time in her life, mother begged just a few bites for her starving little ones. They refused to give us even a crumb, though my brother and I cried pitifully at the sight of food. "This is the last we have," they said. "When this bread is finished, we will never have any more." When mother tried to turn our attention away to the drying of our clothes, she broke down and burst into tears and cried with us. We were all so hungry.

Not long afterward, these people went on and left

us, and we were alone by the roadside. Why did we not slip out of sight and try to escape? Where? There was no escape. Wild Bedouin tribes and roving bands of soldiers roamed through the hills. There were only Turkish villages near, and we could not hope for kindness from them. Death was on every side.

And then the thought of the two sick loved ones who had been carried on ahead, spurred us to join the forlorn ranks of the exiles again. It seemed that we had no strength with which to move, but sometimes love is more powerful than human energy. We struggled to our feet, and once more I began to pull mother along by holding her hands. She begged us to leave her to die, but that we could not do. Long ago our shoes had worn out, and now our feet were tied in rags. My brother Arasig could walk faster than we, and he said now that he would go ahead and try to locate my sisters if they were at the next camping place, and be ready to take us to them when we arrived.

Poor little brother! I can see him yet as he stumbled away—his swollen abdomen, his body only skin and bones, his eyes sunken, and it seemed the very apathy of death on his face. How he lived and walked on I do not know!

Sold to an Arab

MOTHER'S lips moved in prayer as we struggled ahead, as she pleaded with God to keep her faithful to Him, and to keep her children faithful in this hour of trial. Of course, we had only to drop to our knees at the Mohammedan call to prayer, and our sufferings would have been ended. But we never thought of doing this.

Another day passed. We came to a village. Mother asked for a blanket to make us a little shelter where we might rest, but this was refused. She had a few pretty buttons left on her dress, and at last the Turks—for it was a Turkish village—said they would sell us a little corn for these buttons. It seemed that we just could not take another step, so we tried to hide ourselves, and hoped they would let us stay for a little while. But the village people knew we were refugees, so they drove us back to the line with sticks and stones, shouting, "Armenian pigs! Armenian pigs! Armenian pigs!"

Then we came to the Orontes River. Water! It was wonderful. We drank, and drank, and felt much revived. We followed along the bank of this river, and then late one afternoon came to the camp. Almost the first person we saw was my little brother. He was looking for us, but he had not yet found my sisters. We left mother and started out together on the search.

As we ran about, asking everybody, "Are the carriages with the sick people here? Where are the carriages? Where is the hospital tent?" we fell on the rocks and were torn by thorns, for it was an immense camp, and there were many people here.

Finally we found a man we knew, who told us where to go, and said he had seen my sisters. We went back to mother and hurried to them as fast as we could. At last we stood beside them. Will I ever forget the pitiful sight? Rebecca, who was just fourteen years of age, was in her last hour of death. Starvation and its attendant fever and suffering had done their ghastly work. Mother cried out, "O Rebecca, child, what is the matter?" She opened her big brown eyes and looked first at mother and then at me, but she could not speak a word to either of us. In a few minutes all was over. We had come just in time to see her die. As we closed her beautiful eyes and smoothed her hair, we wept bitterly. Then my sister, Ahavne, spoke. "Do not cry, mother," she said, "we are all going to die." But somehow this did not lessen our grief nor ease our heartbreak.

The soldiers would not let us stop to bury Rebecca. Mother asked a woman standing near to help us, and we managed to carry her to a field not far away, and placed her there. We were obliged to leave her uncovered and alone. We could not stop for even a prayer. The Turks drove us on—and on—and on! But I am sure our merciful loving Father looked down from heaven and marked her resting place. She never

denied Him by word or look. If I am faithful, I shall meet her again in that resurrection morning when Jesus comes to claim His own.

Once more morning came. How *could* we go? But we must! There was no escape, no rest. The carriages did not go farther, so there was no more transportation for those who were sick. Ahavne was so sick she could hardly lift her head. But she was compelled to walk with us. Mother made two small bundles of the very few belongings we had left, and strapped one on her own back and the other on mine. Arasig still carried what was left of the tent. Then we got my sister to her feet, and she leaned on me as we walked. Mother leaned on Arasig, for neither could she walk without help. Slowly we followed the moving line of stricken humanity. My sister forced herself to walk with my feeble help for several miles. But finally she dropped down by the roadside, and could go no farther.

Mother begged the soldiers to allow us to stay with her the few hours which she could possibly live. But they only said in Turkish, "Go on. Go on!" And guns were held ready and straps raised to beat us if we dared disobey. Why did they not kill us? That would have been too merciful!

When my sister realized that she must be left to die alone, her grief and fright were heartbreaking. Terror-stricken, she begged us not to leave her. Mother tried to comfort her by saying that we would also probably be dead in another day. But that was not much help.

There was no time for prayer or even for a last tender embrace. She waved her hand feebly as we looked back. It seemed that we simply *could not leave* her. But there were the guns and bayonets and knives and fierce soldiers! And so, with tears streaming down our faces and our hearts fairly bursting with grief, we waved back to her. The road turned around a foothill and—that—was—all!

Dear Ahavne! She was so lovely and loving, and so beloved. I do not know her fate, though probably she was soon beyond suffering, as she was even then in the last throes of starvation. But to leave her dying alone by the roadside, unprotected and at the mercy of wild beasts and brutal men—how can I write it down! But our Father knows. He has marked the spot where she sleeps, and I am sure her angel stood guard when her loved ones could not. Someday we shall meet again. Precious sister! What a happy reunion that will be!

Only three of us were now left. There were more days of weary marching without food and little to drink. We were so starved that my little brother and I picked corn from the dung of animals and begged mother to cook it for us. But when she had prepared it, we could not eat it, for we had never tasted anything unclean. Then we went back to eating grass again, though when it was cooked it was bitter as gall. We could hardly force it down.

And then we came to Hamah. Here we were allowed to stop and rest. The camp was made outside of the

city in a great field. And Arabian merchants had set up a bazaar, or market, where they were selling things to the refugees. There were thousands of Armenians in this camp. Few of them had anything with which to buy food or clothing. But perhaps there was a valuable ring, or a jeweled pin, or a small piece of money that had escaped the keen eyes of the Turkish soldiers, who had so often robbed us. These could change hands here, and a miserable existence be more or less prolonged. Why? Because the love of life is a fire which burns bright in every human heart. We sometimes think we wish to die, but when actually face to face with the specter, death, we shudder and turn away.

As we rested on the ground near the bazaar and I saw the food, I begged mother for something to eat.

She said, "I have no money. I cannot buy you food."

"Then sell something," I urged. "Sell your dress. O mother, *please!* I am so hungry!"

A man whom we knew came by while I was crying and begging. He had something to do with helping in the bazaar. "Serpouhi," he said, "the Arab merchants are buying girls. Why don't you ask your mother to sell you to an Arab? Then you would have plenty to eat, and also she would have money to buy food for herself and your brother."

I was all excited. "O mother, please sell me," I begged. "Then we can eat again."

"Do you want to go with an Arab?" she asked me, and there were tears in her eyes.

"Oh, yes, mother, I want to go. I want food. I am so hungry."

And so several of the Arabs came and looked at me. They examined my teeth and felt of me. There was really nothing left but skin and bones, and I had every sign of starvation. All the men who came spoke kindly. But finally the kindest one of all, an Arab of middle age, offered to give my mother a little gold money for me. Perhaps it was \$5. I do not know. I remember that she asked how much it would make in Turkish pounds.

Of course, I was just a little girl, and I was so hungry I did not think of anything else. I had not dreamed that I must be separated from my mother. When the man wanted to take me away, I objected strenuously, and insisted that she come also.

"No, Serpouhi," she told me, with the tears streaming down her face, "it is you who are bought. The man did not buy me. You must go with him. He will be kind to you, and will give you food."

I threw my arms around her neck and cried and cried. This was too much! How could I leave my dear mother? Finally my master gently loosed my hand and said, "Come with me now. Some other day we will return and get your mother."

I was heartbroken. I kissed her again and again. She told me that someday I must come back and try to find my father, that I must not forget to pray to God in heaven, nor to keep His Sabbath. The last thing she said was that we would meet again in the



"The Arab took my hand and led me away. My mother and brother stood looking! Looking! Looking!"

new earth. And then the Arab took my hand and led me away.

My mother and brother stood looking! looking! looking! Somehow I realized that I would never see them again. But I do not think my brother knew what had happened—he was so nearly starved. I am sure that neither of these dear ones could have lived more than a few days longer, even with the food that they were now able to buy. Two more lonely, unmarked graves! I know not where they are, but God knows. And I can trust Him to watch over this precious dust until the great resurrection morning dawns.

My master's name was Allel Moose. He owned a long line of camels and donkeys, and he traded in fruits and dates and fine flour. He bought me just as he was starting for his desert home with his merchandise. Grief at leaving my mother blotted all fears of the future from my mind, and when I was placed on the back of a camel to ride, I made no objection. But the constant swaying motion of that animal is like the waves of the sea, and was very sickening to me. I did not like it. So when we stopped for refreshment, I made signs with my hands—for, of course, I could not speak a word of Arabic—and asked that I might ride one of the donkeys. When the men understood my wishes, they took me down. All the journey after that I rode my own special donkey.

These people in the caravan (there were ten or fifteen men and several Arab women) were very kind to me.

They smiled and gave me food. I remember especially the dates and candies. I had been hungry for so long that I just smiled back at them, since I could not speak, and ate everything they offered me. Allel Moose had bought me, not for a wife or a slave, but to be his own daughter, since his wives were childless. And he proved to be indeed a real father to me.

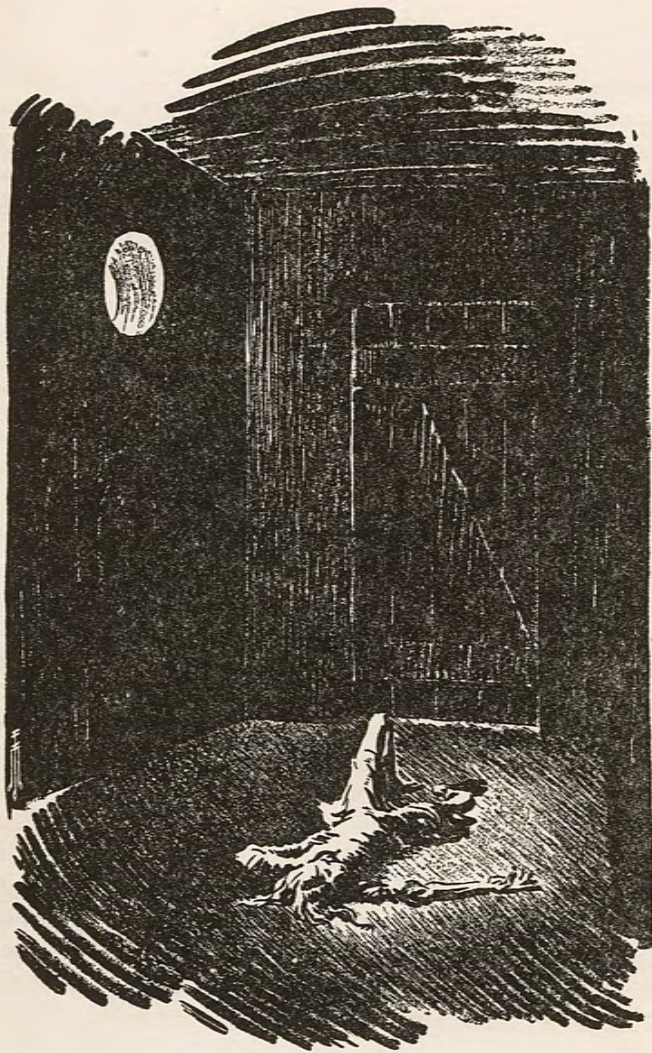
The Home of Allel Moose

AFTER journeying several days, we neared a Turkish town and stopped on the outskirts. My master spread out his goods and opened his bazaar, for in that section of the country wherever a merchant displays his goods there is a bazaar. According to custom, when we made camp, he pitched a little tent for me, where I could be alone and rest.

As I sat in this tent, a number of Turkish soldiers came along and went through our company, looking for Armenian girls. It was not the plan of the Turks to see a single one of this hated race survive, and they well knew that the Arabs had been buying some of these girls from starving refugees. Therefore they systematically searched every caravan.

When these soldiers discovered me alone in my little tent, they began to point their guns at me and to ask what business I had to be there. Then two of them took hold of me, one holding each arm, and they threw me to the ground with all their might—not only once, but many times. Then they kicked me, and struck me with their guns. It was their purpose to kill me. They said so. I cried for help, but my Arab master could do nothing. He just looked and shook his head sorrowfully.

Soon my face was scratched and bleeding, and my body was also in the same condition. I was half dead



"Merciful unconsciousness must have come to ease the pain for a little while, because the next thing I remember was when they threw me on the floor of a dark room like a stable, locked the door, and left me there alone."

with fright and suffering when they picked me up and carried me away. Merciful unconsciousness must have come to ease the pain for a little while, because the next thing I remember was when they threw me on the floor of a dark room like a stable, locked the door, and left me there alone. They probably thought I would be dead in a little while, for I was frail and very much wasted from the long march and starvation.

It was midday when the soldiers found me, and about three o'clock, as near as I can say, when they put me in prison. As the afternoon wore on, I waited, wondering what would be my fate, and whether or not my kind master would come and find me. At last, as the angel of the Lord guided Peter out of his prison, so I think the Lord sent His angel to show me the way out of mine.

There was a round hole—the only thing like a window—in the wall of this room. It was four or five feet from the ground, and about a foot in diameter. My captors evidently thought there was no danger of my trying to escape. As the hours passed, I grew desperate. I simply *must* get out and find my master. I discovered I could move about. None of my bones were broken, in spite of the severe beating and kicking I had endured. Then I began to claw in the mud walls for a finger hold, then for a toe hold. Gradually I climbed up, but it was slow work, for I was very sick and much bruised. When I reached the hole and breathed the blessed fresh air again, I was frantic for fear the soldiers would come and find me before I could

get away. I wiggled through, even though it was a tight squeeze, and thankfully dropped to the ground outside. I listened. There was no sound. It took me only an instant to get my breath, and then how fast I ran!

I had no sense of direction, and did not know where the bazaar and camp of my master had been. But as I ran, I prayed a prayer that God would please help me to find these Arab friends. Was it chance or a kind providence? At any rate, I found myself on the highway running, running. The shades of evening were falling. Just ahead I saw a caravan. It was not moving, but standing still. How I hoped that it might be the caravan of Allel Moose. And it was. He had made ready to start, and was waiting till dark, hoping that I might be able to escape my captors and find him.

When I came and stood breathless and bleeding before him, he greeted me like a father. His eyes filled with tears, and he took his own white handkerchief and washed away the blood from my poor bruised face and tenderly dressed the cuts and bruises on my lacerated body. I begged him to hurry, to get started on our way, that we might be sure to escape the cruel Turks. I cried and cried at the mere thought of falling into their hands again. He also was afraid, and we started almost immediately for his home, traveling as rapidly as possible.

When morning came, Allel Moose took the precaution to dress me so that I would look like an Arabian boy. He wrapped me in his own sheepskin coat, with

the wool on the outside, and bound a silk handkerchief about my head for a turban. He could not, of course, prepare another dress for me, but he showed me cloth he had bought for a nice new red dress, which his wives would make when we arrived at our destination. My feet were bare. I was so nervous the donkey could not go fast enough for me. We traveled now night and day without stopping to rest, and at the end of the fourth day reached my new home at Abu Galgal, in Arabia. It was just a little settlement of about two hundred houses.

Our caravan drew up before a long, low, rambling plaster house, with stables and outhouses all combined under one flat roof. Around it was a large courtyard, surrounded by a high wall of solid masonry. This was for protection and privacy. When we arrived, the two wives of Allel Moose came out to greet us. They seemed very glad to see me, and at once took me in charge. First they brought me food—bread and butter and buttermilk. How good it tasted! I ate and ate. Then they washed me and put me to bed to rest. I was very tired. The night was hot; so we all slept on soft sheep's wool mattresses laid on the roof, where the breezes blew cooler.

The next morning I took my first look through the house which was to be my home, and I can see it today even as I saw it then. There were holes in the outside plaster walls for windows, but no glass covered them. There was a reception room for visitors, a large living room, a separate room for each of the wives, and a

kitchen. The partitions were made by heavy hanging draperies. There was a large fireplace in the living room, where wood was burned on cool, rainy days, which sometimes come in that part of Arabia. This was also the dining room in bad weather. But when the sun shone, we ate in the open courtyard. There were oil lamps for light at night, and gay woolen carpets were spread over the mud floors, when we slept on them or when we entertained guests.

This first day in my new home was very eventful. All the village came to see the new daughter of Allel Moose. The courtyard was filled with people. They looked at me and felt me and talked about me among themselves. Of course, I could not understand what they said. But they were very kind, and smiled, and I just smiled back at them.

Also my new dress was made by Asha and Sada, my Arab father's two wives. I had never had a dress made like this, for in our Armenian home we dressed after the style of Europeans. But now I belonged to an Arabian family.

Arabian women dress in long, loose dresses, wearing a loose kimonolike coat over the dress. This coat is always made of silk if the women belong to well-to-do families. Their shoes are high-topped boots, trimmed with bright-colored tassels. And about the head is worn a gay silk scarf or handkerchief, arranged turbanlike. The top of the head is always covered, but their long hair is left free under the back of the scarf.

Expensive gold and bead ornaments are often used

to decorate the hair. Their beautiful bracelets, set with precious and semiprecious stones, are part of their adornment. They do not care for cheap, tawdry ornaments, for an Arab's wealth is estimated by the jewels of his wives and daughters as well as by his flocks and herds. Also, all Arab women have their faces tattooed. This is a mark of distinction and beauty to them.

My own new costume was a miniature of that which I have just described, for Arab girls dress exactly like their mothers. It was made of bright red silk. I was very proud of it, and when I was dressed up, my new father was very proud of me. He smiled and patted me and called me his "good little Arab girl."

The Arab men wear full bloomers under a loose coat, called a *zaboon*. Their heads also are covered with many soft folds of a silken scarf to form a cap. About the waist is a wide sash, in which they carry a pistol or knife, or sometimes both. They wear high-topped boots. And they always carry with them a short, thick club with a hard butt on the end for protection. Arab boys dress just as do the men.

After a short rest at home with us, Allel Moose started on another business trip with his caravan. He was to be away several months. A few days after he left, I fell sick with a terrible fever. I know now that this was the result of eating too much after my long period of starvation. Also, I had come in contact with lice somewhere on the long march, and these had increased until now I was fairly alive with them. I am sure these vermin had much to do with my sickness.

I do not know how long I was sick before the wives gave me up to die. But one day when they thought I could not possibly live long, they carried me out to a lonely spot on the bank of the Euphrates River, which flowed not far from the village. There they made a rude shelter of four upright poles and a grass roof, and left me under it to die alone. I think they were really glad to rid themselves of me in this way, because when they saw how much my father thought of his Helema, as he named me, they became very jealous.

"Die, You Pig, Die!"

I CANNOT describe the horror of those weeks on the riverbank alone. It was like a dreadful nightmare, for, you see, I did not die, as they expected, even though I was desperately ill. Every day, as the wives went out to work in the fields, they came to look at me, often accompanied by others from the village. And they all beat me with sticks and stoned me. Every time they struck me, they cried, "Die, you pig, die!" I can feel those sharp, cruel stones yet, as they hit me, and it makes me shudder.

I had a mattress on which to lie, and a blanket for covering, but they gave me no food save a piece of hard black bread, which they threw to me after my daily stoning and beating. I could not eat it, and sometimes I had not strength even to reach out and pick it up. But the pieces I could secure, I hid under my mattress. Such a pile as I had in time! If I wanted water, I must crawl to the river and drink from the stream. That I might talk with my heavenly Father was my only comfort.

The fever made me very thirsty, of course. And my knees became so cut and bruised from crawling over the stones to the water that I could not bear to have anything touch them. Also my body was cut and bleeding in many places because of the stones and sticks that struck me. My eyes were very much swollen, and

finally I became blind. Also, the skin all over me turned black, and my hair was matted and full of vermin. Still the wives and their friends came to torment me. Not one person showed me kindness.

Then one morning I heard them talking. Before this I could understand very little Arabian, but now—it was strange but true—I knew every word they spoke.

"Let us shoot her tomorrow," they said.

"Oh, no!" I screamed, as I sat with my swollen, misshapen body humped up under the shelter. "Please do not shoot me. Just leave me alone. I will die—I promise!"

And so they went away.

The tears rolled out of my poor blind eyes, and down my wasted cheeks. I tried to pray, but it seemed that God must surely have forgotten me. I decided that I could once more crawl down to the river and there drown myself. It was a slow, painful journey, but finally I arrived.

As I put my face down in the cool water, there came to my mind the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Quickly I raised up, for it seemed as if someone had spoken. I listened. There was no sound save the soft rippling of the river as it flowed.

Then I thought once more of the wives and what they would surely do to me if I was not dead tomorrow. And once more I put my face under water to end my misery. But again I heard the voice saying, "Thou shalt not kill." And I raised my head and burst into tears.

"O dear God," I cried aloud, "I do not want to die, but how *can* I live? I cannot drown myself, but won't you please let me go to sleep and not wake up again, or else make me well, so I can go away from here?"

And then I felt a strange, sweet peace. He would do for me what was best. After I had rested awhile, I managed to get back to my shelter.

Another day the wives came with some of the village people, and I heard them say they were going to bury me alive. To these Mohammedans it was no sin to put me out of my misery. Was I not, after all, only an *Armenian Christian*? As they began to dig the grave, I screamed and begged them:

"Please, oh, *please*, do not do that to me. I will die, I really will."

Finally, as I screamed and pleaded they threw many stones at me, so that I was badly bruised. Then they went away and left me. Of course I was very weak. But I prayed for strength, and at last got back to my bed. How thankful I was to my Father in heaven. I knew that only He could have rescued me.

But after I thanked Him for sparing me this further suffering, I asked Him why He had not let me die with my mother and brothers and sisters on the march. Then there came into my mind the words father had often spoken as we gathered for worship in our dear home in Ovajik. "God," he told us, "brings no experience but what is for our good. He has a purpose in all He does, even though we may not see it."

And when I thought of that, I was content to be patient.

It was a wild spot where I was, and often at night the wild animals would come so near that I could feel their breath and put my hand on their fur, but they did not harm me, and I was not afraid of them. I feared only what human beings might do to me.

How long was I there by the river? Really, I do not know. It seemed a year, though, of course, it was not. Then one day I heard a quick step coming toward me. I could not see, but instinctively I knew it was Allel Moose. He stooped down and looked at me. Then I heard an exclamation. Then I heard his kind voice say, "Little Helema, who did this to you?"

"Your wives did it," I sobbed, "and, O master, take me away from here before I die."

I heard his feet hurrying away, and burst into tears of utter despair, for had not he, too, left me? But soon I heard his step returning. Again he bent over me.

"Helema," he said, "can you see this stick?"

"No, master," I answered, "my eyes do not see."

"Feel it, then, Helema," and he took my hands, and I knew it was a big stick.

He said, "I am going now to beat Asha and Sada just as they have beaten you."

I begged him not to leave me, but he patted my shoulder and said, "Do not be afraid any more, my Helema. You will be all right." His voice was so kind.

After a while I heard him coming back. He was



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not alone, and I was frightened. What if he had brought the wives? I knew they would be very angry that I had told on them. What would they do to me? But it was his sister with him. She was a widow, had one son, and lived in a smaller house near us. She had with her a large kettle of hot water and scouring soap and other things.

She was very sorry when she saw me. She shaved my head. Every curl was gone. Then she scrubbed it clean. "Now," she said, "you will have Arab hair." Then she took away my clothes, and Allel Moose burned them while she scrubbed me hard with something rough. The black skin peeled off just like a shell under the strenuous rubbing, and she said as she scrubbed, "Now you have new skin—Arab skin."

When she had finished, once more I was clean! clean! clean! There were no more lice—not one. She rolled my poor, bruised body in a blanket, and Allel Moose tenderly carried me home and left me there while he went away with his sister to arrange a place at her house where I could stay until I was well.

The wives were *not* glad to see me. They had *not* enjoyed their beating. They were very angry that I had told about their bad treatment of me. Now the moment we were alone, they got sticks and whipped me again, and they said, "If you tell on us this time, we will beat you to death when next we have a chance."

I cried and cried and begged them to stop, but they were too angry, and kept on until we heard the footsteps of Allel Moose returning. Then they stopped in

a hurry and hid their sticks. And I closed up my mouth tightly and said not a word.

My master carried me to his sister's house, and she was very kind to me. Every day he came to see me and brought me fresh cow's milk to drink. After a while I could stand, and then step by step I had to learn to walk just like a baby. Then one day I could see again. For a long time, however, my body was swollen and misshapen, the abdomen being much distended from starvation and from eating grass for so long. But after a while this, too, passed away, and I was plump and rosy and full of life.

Tattooed Like an Arab

BUT finally Asha and Sada also began to take notice of me, and asked Allel Moose to please bring me home again as his own little daughter. I was frightened at the thought of being with them once more. What would they do to me this time? But I loved my kind Arab father very much, and knew he wanted me to return to him. So on the day when he came for me I went. Surprising as it was, the wives were now very kind to me, and seemed genuinely glad to see me back at home. They tried in every way to make me love them. They gave me pretty beads and bracelets, and sewed me new dresses. And sometimes Asha, who was the younger, and very beautiful, would put the circle of gold money which she wore on her own head, around my head, and say, "Pretty, pretty," as she patted my curls.

I helped them with their work about the house, as they made the bread and cheese, and did other things. But it was only little errands they let me do, like bringing them things. And they were so very jealous of each other that I had to be careful not to help one more than the other. They were always asking, "Helema, which of us do you love best?" And I would always make reply, "I love you both just the same." One of the things I liked best to do was to feed the little lambs and kids belonging to my father's herd, so I spent much time playing with them.

About this time Allel Moose married another wife, a Turkish woman. She lived in another house some distance away, and came to see me and brought me presents. Sometimes I would go to visit her. We liked each other very much. I wished I could live with her, because her house was filled with beautiful things, and was not an Arab home, but was more like what I had been used to when I lived in Ovajik. But my father said no, I must stay at his main home.

For some time now there had been talk about having my face tattooed. As I have said, every Arab woman has tattooing, and this is thought to add much to her beauty. I did not wish to be tattooed, and still I did. I was afraid the Turks would get me again, and knew that if I were so marked, they would think that I was an Arab and not an Armenian, and would never touch me. My father was very anxious to have this done.

One morning, the artist they had arranged with to tattoo me arrived. I did not object when she made ready to begin. This work is done by four fine needles tightly tied together. They are stuck deep into the true skin, but so rapidly you can hardly see them move. The fluid used is not ink, but a blue dye made from the gall bladder of goats and sheep. These are dried and then ground into powder and mixed with water. When she was ready, the artist asked me to lie down on a rug spread in the courtyard. I did. I did not know that the tattooing would hurt. But when she began to prick my face and the blood ran down, I kicked and screamed that I did not want to be tattooed,

and begged her to let me go. However, the wives were there to help her, and one held my hands while the other sat on my feet. My protests were in vain. I must be made beautiful. I rose from that floor an Arab to all appearances.

When my father came home that evening, he was very much pleased with the improvement in my looks. He smiled and patted my shoulder and said, "My dear Helema, my little Arab girl."

Three years passed, three happy years. The wives tried to outdo each other in showing affection for me and favoring me. They worked in the fields, but I was not allowed to do this. Every time I was left alone at home, the gate of the courtyard was closed. I was safe behind those high walls. But the gate was not locked, and one day, as I sat crocheting, suddenly I looked up and saw standing by my side a Turkish soldier. I was paralyzed with fear. He asked me for buttermilk. I said, "We have no buttermilk, and neither have I permission to give you any." He took hold of me. But just at that moment, Allel Moose came through the gate. He was very angry, and ordered the soldier to leave, which he did. It seemed that I was never to be safe from the dreaded Turk. But after that they always locked the gate.

When I could no longer play outside the yard, I often played upon the flat roof of the house. Our pastime was throwing grass balls back and forth to the neighbor girls outside the walls. The house of some of the neighbor children was connected with mine. They

could come and play hide and seek with me behind the chimney and around the house.

My family did all they possibly could to make a Mohammedan of me. They even taught me a prayer to say to Allah. Sometimes I would repeat over after them the words they said, but this was never prayer to me. I always prayed in my heart to the God in heaven. He was my only comfort when I could not help thinking of the dear home and loved ones I had lost.

One day I heard Allel Moose and his wives talking about my future. They said I was nearly old enough to marry, and that since I was healthy and full of good spirits and life, some young sheik would be sure to pay a good price for me as a wife. This was the custom of the country, and while I knew that I could not expect my lot to be different from other girls of the Arab tribes, yet this bargaining was most offensive to me. I knew I was a Christian girl, and could never consent to be one of several wives to a man whose religion and habits and standards of life and thought were all so different from my own.

For several days this was the main topic of conversation at our home. What price should be asked for Helema? How many horses, camels, and donkeys? How much money? To my father and his wives, this meant the marriage contract; to me it meant simply being sold into hateful bondage. Then the matter became known in the community, and young sheiks came to see and shook my hand and spoke to me. After that

they would talk to Allel Moose, and then go away. Perhaps he had made the contract price too high, for he was very proud of his Helema.

Finally I became tired of it all, and so disgusted that as we were all in the living room one evening together, I stepped to the wall where my father's long Arab gun was hanging, took it from its place, and pointed it at my heart. Quickly he cautioned me to have a care, for it was loaded.

"I know it is loaded," I answered, "and I also know how to fire it. Are you really going to sell me into marriage?"

"Do you not wish to marry?" he questioned, startled.

"No," I told him, "I want always to live in your home with you."

"Put the gun up, Helema," he laughed. "You shall not marry if you do not wish to."

What a deliverance! Once more the hand of a loving heavenly Father had intervened and saved me so I could serve Him as He wished and as I desired.

One day, in the spring of the year, my father and his wives went out into the fields, and in their hurry forgot to lock the courtyard gate. Just outside the wall ran a clear little brook. I wanted very much to have a drink of that cool water, and sighed that I must wait until the gate was unlocked. Then I discovered it was open. Quickly I brought a cup and slipped outside. Almost instantly I found myself face to face with a soldier who was dressed in Turkish uniform, but who spoke to me in Armenian.

"You are an Armenian girl," he said.

"No," I answered in Arabic, "I am an Arab." I was very much frightened.

He laughed and said, "If you are an Arab, how is it that you understand what I have said to you in the Armenian language?"

I tried to run back inside the gate, but he drew out his gun and said he would shoot me if I did not stay and talk with him. I stood there trembling. I was afraid that my Arab family would return and find him there. If they did, I knew they would be angry and never let him speak to me again.

There was an Armenian man with his wife living in the village of Abu Galgal. They were elderly people and kept a farm, and I had visited them occasionally for the joy of speaking Armenian. Now I told this soldier to go to their home and I would come later and talk to him there. These people had lived in Abu Galgal for a long, long time. They had wood to sell, and several times I had gone there when our wood was scarce to get a few sticks. That evening, after our supper was eaten, I asked permission to go to this house and get some wood. Allel Moose told me I might go, with many cautions about how I should come back quickly. It seemed that my feet hardly touched the ground, I hurried so fast.

This young Armenian soldier told me that the World War was now over, and that Germany and Turkey had been defeated and had lost a great deal of their territory, and were no longer making war upon Armenians. He



"You are an Armenian girl," he said.

said that the victorious Allied nations had declared that the Armenians were free, and had ordered the Turks to bring back all the Armenian girls who had been sold to the Arabs and to restore them to their own relatives if possible. If this were not possible, they were taken care of in the Near East Relief Orphanage, which had been established for this purpose. I learned that Armenian soldiers in Turkish uniform were scattered all through Arabia looking for girls who were in Arab homes. Someone had told him that there was an Armenian girl in the house of Allel Moose, and he had been keeping watch for several days, trying to find a chance to speak to me.

He wanted me to go away with him at once. I knew if I did this it would bring great trouble to the Armenian friends at whose house we were talking, for my people would most certainly punish them if I should disappear. Also, I hated to bring grief to my Arab father, who had been so kind to me. Therefore, I refused to go with this Armenian young man, but told him to go back to Aleppo and tell the authorities to send a government order. Then only could I leave my Arab father without making trouble for anybody.

He went away, and several weeks later a squad of Turkish soldiers came to our home with a letter from the military government, saying that I must go to Aleppo to meet my "brother." The young man had represented me as his sister, to obtain my quick release. I think I shall always be frightened at the sight of Turkish soldiers, and when these appeared and said I

must go with them, I cried and clung to kind Allel Moose.

"I will not go," I said; "I do not want to leave you."

The wives cried too, and said I should not go. Then my father paid the Turkish soldiers money, and told them to go back to Aleppo and say to my brother that I had run away. He had just before this married another new wife—his fourth—and she lived about a half day's journey distant. Now he put me on his fine Arabian horse and rode hurriedly away with me to her home. And he hid me for several weeks until he felt that all danger was over. Then he came and took me back to Abu Galgal.

Rescued!

SOON after this, Allel Moose went away on another business trip. It was his last journey. While in a distant city, he was stricken with a heart attack, and died suddenly. Only his merchant friends were with him at the last, and when they brought us word of his death, they said he had talked about his little Helema all the while after he was stricken. He left with them instructions that his brother should take me and care for me when he was gone.

When the news of my father's death came to our home, the wives all gathered at his main house and beat their breasts and wailed and pulled out handfuls of their hair and also cut off my curls as a sign of mourning. The day after this, my uncle came and did his best to comfort me for my great loss.

"Just think, Helema," he said, "my brother did not mention his wives, nor leave any message for me except that I should take care of you even as my own daughter." He told me that half the estate was mine and half his, and if I would come to him as my father had directed, he would make me his sole heir, since his wives were childless. I was very glad to go to his home.

The wives of my father, Asha and Sada, now took their personal effects and departed to their own people. They cried as they packed their simple treasures, and wanted me to go with them. They promised to be

always good to me if I would do this. The other two wives also returned to their people. Soon all four of them married again.

We spent several days packing up the things in the house, and getting the flocks and herds together. I remember how the servants my uncle had brought with him loaded the camels with our household effects, and finally the long caravan started for his home at Bazor in the desert. While he had a house for the rainy season, during the time his flocks and herds were in pasture he lived in a large tent made of camel and goat hair. It was to this tent house that he now took me. His two wives welcomed me and were very kind to me. Here my days passed much as they had in the old home. I had the care of the lambs and kids, and lived a happy, carefree life.

I had been in my uncle's home for about six months when as I came near the tent house one day, returning from feeding my small charges, I saw horses tied and people gathered, and knew that something was wrong. The wives saw me coming, and motioned me to enter the tent the back way, as the company was in what you would call our sitting room or front yard. They told me that Turkish soldiers had come again for me, and begged me not to go away and leave them.

Really, I did not wish to go with the soldiers, much as I wanted to see my own father. I was afraid of what the Turks would do to me when I was again in their power. My uncle was away from home on business, so his head wife spoke for me. She offered the



"One day, returning from feeding my small charges, I saw horses tied and people gathered, and knew that something was wrong."

men money to go away and leave me alone. This time, however, the soldiers could not be bought. They said I must come, that the government demanded my return, and had sent them to get me.

How did they know where I was? The Armenian soldier who had first found me and represented himself as my brother, had been much disturbed when he was told that his "sister" had run away. He reported to my cousin, whom he knew, and this relative at once set out in search for me. He did not find me, but he did find his own sister, who had also been sold into Arabia. While rescuing her he heard of my whereabouts. Returning to Aleppo, he at once reported to the government, and also told an Armenian soldier friend who had lived in my home town of Ovajik. Hence the soldiers.

I felt very much frightened when I knew that I really must leave my dear uncle and his wives and my pleasant home, and go with these Turkish soldiers. We all cried. One of my uncle's friends, a neighbor, happened to be calling on us when the soldiers arrived. He stayed to see if he could help. Now he came and took my hand and said, "Helema, do not be afraid. I will go with you to the government office and see that everything is all right. You do not have to go alone." And so he put me on his own donkey, and we followed the soldiers.

They guided us to Abulkemal, quite a large town, about a day's journey distant. This was the place where at that very moment my uncle was on one of

his business trips. When we arrived there, Onnig Chamechickian, the young Armenian soldier from my home town, was waiting for me.

In my sorrow and distress at leaving my good Arab friends in the desert, and also because I was required to go quickly with the Turkish guard, I did not think of taking any of my personal belongings. I had only the clothes I was wearing—a simple Arabian house dress—in which to appear before strangers in the government office. The Armenian soldier, Onnig, wished us to go to the officials at once, but this good neighbor who had come with me, took me instead to the home of one of his friends, where I would be safe and protected, and then went to find my Arabian uncle and tell him what had happened.

While he was absent on this errand, Onnig sent his real sister to see me. She came dressed in Turkish costume, with a veil covering her face, for she was married to a Mohammedan—a Kurd, I think. When she saw me, she cried out, "Serpouhi! It is indeed she!"

I had not heard my Armenian name spoken for so long that it startled me. I could not see her features, and my heart almost stopped beating as I wondered if this could possibly be my mother or one of my own sisters escaped from death. Then she began to tell me about my family and home in Ovajik. She mentioned the dear family names, and told little incidents of our home and business life. I found that she also had been our close neighbor, but, as was the case with her brother, she was so much older than, being only a little

girl in those days, I did not remember her at all.

She visited for a while, and then her brother came into the room and told me I must now go with him to the government office. There were many soldiers standing all about outside the room where the officials sat. When I came inside, they closed the door and asked me many questions, and demanded to know if I wished to go to my own father, Aaron Tavoukdjian. All of the questions save one I answered by saying simply, "I do not know." But I told them I did wish to go to my father very much indeed. They said this would be arranged. Then, because Onnig Chamechickian had represented himself as my brother, they placed me in his care.

When we left the government office and returned to the house from which we had gone, I found there my Arabian uncle. He begged me not to go and leave him. It was very hard, but while I loved him very much—even more than my Arabian father, if that could be—still the call of my own flesh and blood was strongest. So I told him that I had just come from the officials, and that they were arranging for me to go to Aleppo very soon, and from there to find my own real father. He was very sorry, but when he could not persuade me, he cried and gave me all the money he had with him for the journey. Then I kissed his hand in farewell, as is the custom there.

Before night, Onnig Chamechickian took me to the home of his own sister, saying I should stay there until we were ready to go to Aleppo. We were to wait for

other Armenian girls who were being taken from Arab homes and would go with us. My heart beat high with hope.

But I waited and waited, and still we were not ready to start. I did not wish to stay longer as a guest in the home of Onnig's sister, and so, even though they protested, I found a place to stay in an Armenian home, and remained with these people and worked for them several months. They were very kind, but they were also very poor, for they, too, had been among the exiles, and were just now trying to get a new start in life.

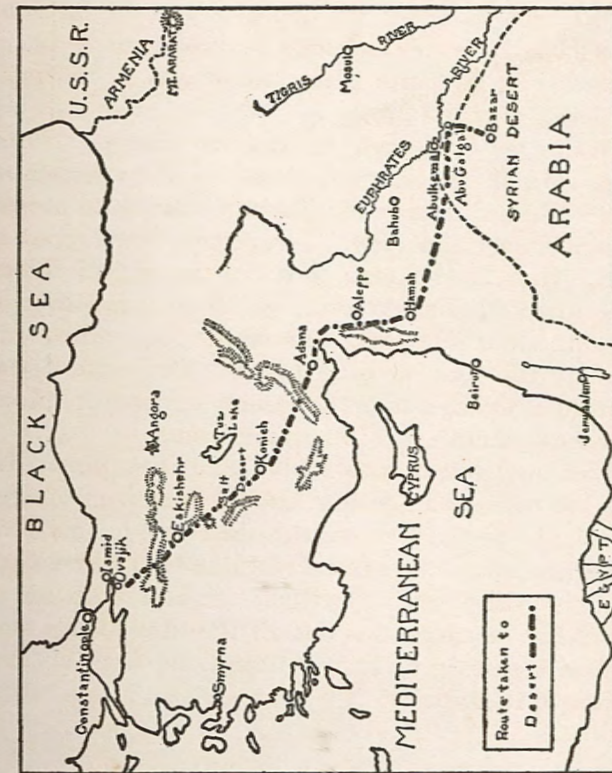
While I was working here at Abulkemal, my Arabian uncle came back to see me several times, and tried to persuade me to return with him to my Arab home. But I could not. I told him that I hoped my father was alive, and that I must go and find him. Each time he was very sorry. Also, each time he gave me money and fruit. However, he said nothing about my inheritance, and I did not think of it myself. It was a goodly inheritance, and I should have been wealthy had I returned to claim it. For I was my Arab father's heir, and he was not a poor man. But now I do not mind. Some things are worth more than wealth.

Another important thing happened while I was staying here in this humble Armenian home. I once more had the days of the week straightened out in my mind, and was able to keep the Sabbath of the Lord upon the seventh day, as the fourth commandment in the Bible teaches. All the months we were on the long death march, and did not know which day it was, we

kept the Sabbath as best we could in our hearts. One of the last things my mother had told me when I left her was not to forget the Sabbath, and all the four years I was in my Arab homes I remembered and kept it sacredly in my heart. But now it was all different, and I was rejoiced.

Finally we were ready to start for Aleppo. There were, after all the waiting, only two of us Armenian girls. We had a guard of Turkish soldiers to protect us, and Onnig also came. I remember we stopped at a large city called Bahub to spend the night. When we reached Aleppo, the other girl was turned over to the authorities who were responsible for sending Armenian girls back to their homes. But since I was recorded as Onnig's sister, they supposed he would look after me, and made no other arrangements.

This young man was really more than kind. He took me to a good hotel in Aleppo, bought me clothes I needed to be really presentable, and paid for my food and all expenses. In the evenings he would come and take his "sister" out somewhere, or visit with me to relieve my loneliness. I was all the time uneasy, and very anxious to start back to Ismid and Ovajik. But he seemed in no hurry.



"There was 'a long, long trail a-winding' back to my father and home."

Finding My Father

ONE day an Armenian woman, who before the deportation had lived near my home, but now, with her three girls, was living here in Aleppo, came to see me at the hotel. I told her my anxiety, and how I did not like to stay there longer, under such circumstances. She invited me to come into her home until we were ready to undertake our journey. Onnig consented to this, and he was so good, and came to see me so often, and brought me so many things! I began to be really happy, and accepted him to take the place of the dear older brother I had lost. If I had been older and more experienced, I would have suspected his intentions and refused his gifts and care. But I was young, and very innocent of the ways of the world.

Then came the rude awakening. One of the little girls of my hostess laughingly confided to me a secret. She had been listening while Onnig talked confidentially with her mother. He said he meant to marry me. He hoped I would consent to become his wife, for he knew I was very fond of him, though he was aware that no thought of marriage had entered my mind.

I was horrified. Marry Onnig Chamechickian! Marry anybody! No, indeed! I was going to do just one thing—find my father! From that moment I refused to see him. All the old pleasant relationship was gone. He still came often, but he was always obliged

to visit with the lady of the house, because I was "out."

Then one evening while I was frolicking with the children just at bedtime, the same little eavesdropper who had spoken before, told me, right in the midst of a pillow fight, that Onnig was coming that very evening to put his question to me. If I would not consent willingly, then he would force me to consent because of the many things he had done for me. I was almost petrified with fright. One thing I knew, I was not going to be married—not to anybody—until I had found my father. But I also knew that I must think fast and act without delay, for it was almost time for him to appear.

"Do not tell anybody," I whispered to the little girl, "but I am going to run away."

Twilight was even then falling. I went downstairs and said to my hostess that I would take a little walk. As I often did this in the evening, she said nothing, but suggested that I should not go far and come home soon.

Once outside, I asked myself, "Where shall I go?" I remembered hearing of an orphanage somewhere in the city where Armenian girls were taken for protection until their own relatives could be located. I decided, yes, I would go there. By this time it was getting very dark, and I walked as fast as I dared. I did not run, because I did not wish people to know that I was running away.

I think I asked everyone I met, "Where is the French orphanage?" They would say, "This way," or, "That way," and then I would hurry in the direction they

gave. Finally I saw a large building ahead, surrounded by a wall. I found the gate and knocked. By that time it was very late, and the streets were dark, there being only a very few lights. The night watchman came with his flashlight. I told him I was an Armenian girl from Arabia, and asked for shelter and protection. He looked at me closely, and seeing the tattoo marks on my face, swung the big gates open and took me inside. How glad I was! I was given a bed, and slept soundly until morning. Somehow, for the first time in weeks I felt at peace and really safe.

When morning came, I went straight to the superintendent of the orphanage, and told him my story from the beginning truthfully. I hid nothing. He was a kind man, and told me I might remain with them, and he hoped I would be happy there.

Onnig learned of my whereabouts, and that very day came to claim me as his sweetheart. But I refused to see him, and the officials of the orphanage respected my desires. He came day after day, but every time it was the same.

It was while in this place that I learned for a certain truth that my father was alive and again living in Ovajik. With this definite news, my longing to see him became so strong that I felt I *must* be on my way home. I told the superintendent about it, and he suggested that I go to see the Red Cross. He said he would gladly sign my release from the orphanage if they would be responsible for my journey.

So, following his directions, I found the Red Cross

office and made my plea. I asked them if they would help me to go to my father. They consented to do this, and the next morning came to the orphanage for me. The papers were signed and I was free to go. Then the kind officials in charge introduced me to another Armenian girl who was to travel with me. They provided us with blankets and warm, comfortable clothes, and gave us a small amount of money. Next they took us to the railroad station and put us on the train for Constantinople, in care of the railroad officials. They could not have been more kind and thoughtful.

When I finally settled down in my seat, and looked out of the window of the train, who should appear on the platform but Onnig Chamechickian and the widow with whom I had stayed before I ran away. I was very much frightened. Somehow they had learned that I was leaving. But they *must not* see me! I slid down in my seat and turned from the window and hid my face. How thankful I was when the train started and I passed out of the city of Aleppo. I felt that once more God had been my deliverer.

Now it seemed to me that the train fairly crawled. Why did it not go faster? I was so anxious to see my dear father. My mind was full of dreams of the home we would re-establish together, where I would make happy his declining years. For were we not the only two of the family now living? Sometimes strange fears beset me. Would father know me? Would he accept me as his child? Four years had made many changes in his little girl of ten. And then there were the tattoo marks on my face!

The journey lengthened to five weary days. At every stop Red Cross workers came aboard the train to see us and help us. They brought us the little money we needed, and also some food. When the train arrived in Yenibasar, and I knew that in a few hours I would be in Ismid, I could hardly contain myself for impatience. How excited I was as we neared that city of such bitter-sweet memories. My heart pounded as I looked anxiously out the window as we pulled into the station. I was hoping to catch a glimpse of just one familiar face.

When the train stopped, I did not think even to say good-by to my traveling companion, who was going on to Constantinople. I rushed out to the platform. There were hundreds of people there, each looking for relatives among the returning exiles. I began to shout as loudly as I could, "Does anyone know my father? Does anyone know Aaron Tavoukdjian?" Finally a boy said, "Yes, I know him. He is in Ovajik. I will take you there."

Hurriedly I gathered my baggage and followed him. We came to the shore of the bay which lies between Ismid and Ovajik. There he had a rowboat tied, and we rode across the water.

Now once more I was walking familiar streets, and I went at once toward our dear old home. I was shocked at its appearance. Such a wreck! The windows were broken, the doors hung by one hinge, the yard was overgrown with weeds and filled with rubbish. It did not look like my home. But there was



"Which daughter is it?" he asked, as he held me off and looked closely at me. "And what have you done to your face?"

a small store where once my father had presided over his large and beautiful salesroom. The boy, who was still with me, said that this was my father's new place of business. He suggested that perhaps he had better go ahead and tell my father that his daughter had come. He did so. But my father did not believe it. He insisted that no daughter of his *could* be alive. He was sure we were all dead, for he had heard nothing about us for more than four long years. Then I rushed in and threw my arms about his neck, and I cried for joy.

"Which daughter is it?" he asked, as he held me off and looked closely at me. "And what have you done to your face?"

This reunion seemed like a dream to both of us. I had prayed so long that the good Lord would help me find my father, and he had prayed so earnestly that if any of his dear ones by any chance were still alive, they might come home. He longed to know of a certainty just what had happened to his beloved wife and children on that cruel, terrible death march.

We were very happy to be reunited, and had much to say to each other. He had been a captain in the Turkish army until the World War was over. Then he had been allowed to come home, and about six months before I arrived, had married a widow with one son about my own age. So I found a stepmother presiding over the old family home rooms on the second floor. This apartment was badly wrecked, but the good woman had done her best with the little she had at hand to make the living quarters comfortable.

As I have said, my father had started a little store where his larger one had been. Of course he was obliged to start again with nothing. But he felt that now the Turkish outrages were a thing of the past, and he had every hope for a prosperous, peaceful future. I helped in both the home and the store.

One day my father went to Ismid to purchase some stock for his store. In the afternoon I sat out in front with my sewing, keeping watch for customers and waiting for his return. Suddenly I looked up and saw a man coming toward me. He looked very queer. He was dressed only in his underwear. His head and feet were bare, and his hands were folded across his breast, while his hair hung down over his eyes. He seemed so dazed and acted so strangely that I thought it must be an insane man, and hurried to close the door. But he came right up and knocked on the door, and spoke my name. When I heard his voice, I knew it was my father, and when I drew him inside, I cried in alarm, "O father, what is the matter? What has happened to you?"

He only replied, "Thank God, my life is spared."

When we had ministered to him, and he was somewhat recovered and rested, he told us that as five of his merchant friends and himself were returning from Ismid with their goods, masked robbers—Turks—had waylaid them. They had taken all the money he had, which was about \$35, his clothes, and the things he had purchased. Then they had beaten him cruelly. His body was literally black and blue.

When he had finished telling this experience, we did not say a word, but all of us fell on our knees and united in thanking the heavenly Father that he was alive and not seriously injured.

Of course, there were still some goods in the store, but this robbery had so crippled his business that father decided to move immediately to Ismid. He felt there would be better business opportunities there, and also that we would be safer in a larger city. He did not now have so much confidence in the goodness of the Turks as heretofore.

Refugees Again

AND so we moved to Ismid. We made the change as quickly as possible. Now we were pitifully poor. We had hardly enough to eat. But father was a merchant by instinct, and he again started up a little business. A friend in the city who had known us for a long time asked me to help in his store. He would pay me a salary of ten Turkish pounds a week. I was glad to have the work, but I asked that instead of paying me in cash, he would give me that amount in merchandise. This I turned in to my father's store, and it was more profitable to us in this form, because it could be turned into a real profit.

As the months passed, our business began to prosper once more, and we had enough to eat and wear. It seemed that our dream of a happy home life restored was to be realized. However, this time of peace was not to last. War came again in 1922, this time between Greece and Turkey, and all Armenians were ordered to leave the city of Ismid. Great battleships were anchored in our harbor, and warships from the United States and other countries came to look after their national interests.

All this happened very suddenly. I was counting money in the goods store where I worked one afternoon, when I looked out and saw people fleeing through the streets. I ran outside and asked the cause of the excite-

ment, and was told to "Hurry, hurry fast! The Turkish soldiers are coming again." I was all alone in the store, and we had goods displayed outside under the windows. I tried to take down these things and carry them in and get the heavy front doors shut. But the excitement and terror overcame me, and I fell fainting across the threshold.

A man who knew me was passing. He saw me fall, and stopped long enough to pick me up and put me inside. Soon the owner of the store came running. He closed and securely locked all the doors and windows, and tried his best to help me run away. But I was so faint and weak that I could not hurry. After he had pulled me for a distance he left me. Then I went as fast as I could, which was really very slowly, to my own home. It was deserted—not a soul was there. As I stood frightened before the locked door, some Greek soldiers passed and showed me the shortest way to the seashore. They told me to make all haste, as the Turkish soldiers of Mustafa Kemal were coming. In the distance I heard the sound of shooting.

Then I was in a great crowd, and soldiers passed carrying wounded men. I ran and ran, the best I could, and finally got to the seashore, but I could not find my people. All the Armenians waited there for several hours, wondering what next would happen to them. But at last word came for us to disperse and go home, for the Turkish troops had withdrawn from the city.

When I reached home, our family was reunited once more, but only for a few hours. The next day there

came another alarm. We must again hurry to the shore. This time I could run with the crowds who came by the shop, and was fortunate to find my own people. There were thousands of Armenians on the shore, waiting for small boats to carry them out to the big ships and safety. All day we waited, and as the battle turned in favor of the Turks, the Greek civilians came, too, and joined our crowd. Of course, everyone was anxious to get away. It was like a herd of stampeding cattle.

It became late at night, and there was still a large crowd waiting for the small boats. In our group were several of our Seventh-day Adventist friends. As we looked back toward the city, we could see a dull glow across the sky, and we knew that once more our homes and everything we possessed except our faith in God and our hope for eternal life, were gone. What a feeling of loneliness and utter discouragement came into our hearts. Refugees again! But we could thank our heavenly Father for life and for each other. Then, all at once, there was a place for us in a boat. Then we were on shipboard. Now we could thank Him also for deliverance once more.

The following day we were safely landed in the Greek port of Tchardak. We were almost emptyhanded, for we had left home in Ismid so hastily that we brought nothing but the clothes we wore and a little light covering for sleeping. Indeed, it is true that all a man hath will he give in exchange for his life.

Somehow my father secured a tent, and under its shelter we resumed life where the hand of Providence



"As we looked back toward the city, we could see a dull glow across the sky."

had led us. Once more he started a little business. With the small amount of money he had, he bought a few notions—needles, thread, stockings, and such things. Then he and my stepbrother sold these from door to door. Little by little he collected enough to open a small shop. Then he found a home for us, and we were glad to go into a house. My stepmother and I were busy always with crocheting and knitting for the store. Also we baked cakes and cookies for sale.

As my father's business began to prosper, and he was now safely established outside of the domain of the treacherous Turk, I felt that the time had come for me to do something about my education. I had always been possessed of a great desire to go to school again.

It was hard for father to consent for me to leave him, but after we had talked it over and considered the matter from every angle, he finally said I could go if arrangements could be made to work my way. He was not able to help me financially. I was very willing to help myself. We consulted with the good pastor of our church about opportunities in Constantinople. He told us that a man with whom he was acquainted was coming to see him on business in a few days, and promised he would tell this man about me, and see what could be done.

The morning after this appointment I was in a hurry to see the pastor. "Did you tell your friend about me?" I asked, all excited.

"O Serpouhi," he said, "I am so sorry. I forgot all about you. And he is just now gone to take an early train."

I was very much disappointed. Father and I had both been praying that if it was the Lord's will, He would open the way. For a moment I was tempted to wonder if the Lord, too, had forgotten me.

But in a short time word came from the pastor that his friend from Constantinople had returned. There was a mistake of some sort in his ticket—I believe he had forgotten to get his visa—and he could not go until afternoon. I have always been sure that God sent him back, for before he left the next time he knew all about my problem.

"You surely must come and go to school," he said. "I will see what I can do when I reach home, and write you."

In a few days I had a letter telling me to come to Constantinople at once.

It was very hard to say good-by to father this time. The tears coursed down his face, which was lined with suffering, and holding me close, he said, "Serpouhi, if I never see you again in this world, I will pray that we may meet in the New Jerusalem. Let us both be faithful to the right. Let us always be careful to do God's will. Wherever you go, little daughter, whatever you do, remember father is praying for you."

When I reached Constantinople, I found that the plan was for me to live in the home of a Seventh-day Adventist minister, A. M. Buzugherian. Therefore, though I was in a strange city, I was not among strangers. I shall never forget the kindness of these people nor their solicitude for my happiness. After I

had been with them several weeks, I met another friend, a nurse who had often been in our home in Ovajik in the old happy days before the deportation, when some of our family were ill. It was from her, as a little girl, that I really gained my first inspiration to be a nurse. She was glad to see me again, and asked me to come and stay for a while with her. She would have me help her with her work, and would teach me English. This was a real opportunity, and I was so eager to learn that I gratefully accepted. I stayed with this friend about a week.

At that time a Seventh-day Adventist orphanage was opened in Constantinople. Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Larson came from America to take charge. After they had become acquainted with me, they asked me to come and stay with them. I did so, and helped with any work there was to do in their home, and with the care of the forty-five or fifty children in the orphanage. Mr. and Mrs. Larson taught me more English and also gave me Bible studies, which I appreciated very much.

For about a year the orphanage continued in Constantinople. Then there was danger again from the Turks, and since all our children were Armenian, we moved to Salonika, Greece.

At this same time when our orphanage was obliged to move, the Armenians were also driven from Tchardak, and my father and his family fled to Salonika with other refugees. Word was sent to the Seventh-day Adventist church there that the orphans were coming, and many of these friends came down to the boat to

meet us when we arrived. To my surprise, there was my father! It was a happy reunion.

I stayed in the orphanage altogether four years. While I was there I received a letter from a relative who had come to America some years before. He asked me if I, too, would not like to come to this land and go to school. I was very happy, for I wanted so much to become a nurse. I had applied for entrance to Greek hospitals, but there were so many Armenian girls asking to be taken in for training that they had no room to receive me.

When I first consulted the consul, he told me that I could not go to the United States. I was very sorry, but after two years it was finally arranged. They were closing the orphanage just then, and it seemed providential that the way had opened, for I had nowhere else to go.

My father could not help me. He did not even have a home for his family. They were with the other refugees in long, overcrowded shed shelters, provided by the Near East Relief. I had been earning a very little money for my work in the orphanage, and every cent of this I gave to them. My stepmother was also able to earn a little and helped. This gave them food, but little more. My father did, however, manage to get together a few handkerchiefs, some spools of thread, and thimbles, needles, and ribbon. These he placed on a small table outside of the shelter building, and sold to the refugees. This was his store now. He had so little!

Many kind friends in America gave a few dollars each to make up the sum of money necessary to pay my transportation. This was sent to G. A. Greaves, the minister in Salonika. Therefore I had my ticket when I left Salonika for Piræus, the port of sailing. Also my good friends there gave me \$50 in American money. I had a statement from the Greek government which served as a passport. When I visited the consul in Salonika and got his visa, he looked over all my papers, and told me I must have a visa by the consul at Piræus; then everything would be in order, and I could go aboard the boat.

When I visited the consul at Piræus, I had to speak through an interpreter because I do not know the Greek language. I thought he told me, after he had put on his seal, that my papers were now finished and I could go aboard the ship. This was on November 8, 1924.

On Board for America

MY father had come to the boat with me when I left Salonika for Piræus. I will never forget his last words, for I have not seen him since. "Serpouhi," he said, "we may never meet again in this world, for you are going a long, long distance from your homeland. But remember we have another home, a better land than this, where there will be no more tears and heartaches, and sad partings. Shall we not meet there in heaven and the New Jerusalem?" His tears fell fast. I, too, was sad to leave my dear father.

But now here in Piræus there was no one to tell good-by, for I was quite alone. Also I was anxious to get aboard the ship which would take me to America. It was to sail at six o'clock in the evening, and about four I started, so that I would surely be in time. It was anchored far away from the shore, and I had to go out in a small boat. So I engaged a man to row me and my two large suitcases across the water. I was so happy and excited to be at last really starting for America, after waiting and hoping and praying so long.

We came to the steamer, and I climbed up the stairs at its side to the deck. An officer stood there and he asked to see my papers. But when he looked at them, he shook his head and said that I could not go to America until I had another visa from the American consul in Athens. You can imagine my disappointment.



"But I am all ready. I must go to America."

I said, "But I am all ready. I must go to America."
 He said, "You cannot go until you have the visa."
 Then he told me to hurry to Athens and see the consul,
 and maybe I could get back in time, "for," he said,
 "the ship does not sail for an hour."

I almost fell down the steps in my haste to get back
 into the little boat. The man hurried to row me to
 shore. We were hardly at the dock when I jumped out
 and left my baggage in the boat, saying, "Just wait;
 I will come back soon," and rushed to the railroad
 station. Fortunately it was not far, and a train was
 standing there ready to start for Athens. I climbed
 aboard.

Piræus is only about twenty minutes' distance from
 Athens by train, so we were soon there. I was on the
 platform before the engine stopped, and ran through
 the station and down the streets, asking people, "Where
 is the American consul? Where is the American consul?"
 I also asked for the street where the consulate
 was, for the officer on the boat had told me that.

Someone said, "Go this way." And when I was
 there, another said, "Go that way." And I was soon
 at the consulate, but was so out of breath I could
 hardly speak.

I knocked at the door as loudly as I could, and also
 pushed the bell. I thought the doorkeeper would *never*
 come. But finally he opened the big door just a little
 way. I tried to push by him, saying, "I must see the
 consul."

He said, "It is too late. Come again tomorrow."

I said, "I have to see him right away. I am starting to America in an hour. I cannot come tomorrow."

Finally I talked so hard that he said, "I will go and ask his secretary."

Then he came back and said, "All right, you can go in."

I think it was the secretary and not the consul who sat behind the big desk in the office. At least, he was not an American, I know.

He said very crossly, "Well, what do you want?"

I said, "I want some writing on this paper, please, and could I have it quickly? I am leaving for America in an hour."

He scowled and said, "This should have been done a week ago. What do you mean coming here like this?"

I was so afraid he was not going to give me the visa. I began to pray in my heart. Then I said, "I did not know. The man in Piræus told me the papers were all right. How do I know about such things? I have done exactly what I was told to do. Now please, I must start to America today. The boat is waiting till I get your writing."

He scowled again and said, "It will cost you \$20."

"All right," I answered, "but would you just hurry, please?"

He made the visa, and I gave him \$20 in American money, and ran out of the door and up the street. I was so glad! But when I was running up the street, I did not feel quite so good. I was thinking about the

\$20. "It was too much," I said to myself. "I will go back again and see that man."

Once more I rang at the consulate. The doorkeeper did not want to let me in. But I said, "This is *very* important—something I have forgotten. I must see the man," and he opened the door.

When I came into the office of the consul, the man who was sitting there looked up surprised and stood by his chair and said, "What do you want now?"

I answered, "You asked \$20 for giving me a visa. That is too much. I am an orphan. I am going to America to school, and I have nobody to pay my way. I have only a little money. I will not ask you to give all the \$20 back, but I do ask you to give me \$10. You may have half, and I will have half."

A queer look came to his face, and his hand went toward his pocket. All that time I was praying. Then he took out a \$10 bill, and gave it to me. "All right," he said, "here it is." Then I was happy once more.

Quickly I hurried to the station. Just as I came, a train for Piræus pulled to a stop. I got aboard and it started that minute. I wished the train would fly!

Back once more in Piræus, I rushed to the dock. But first I looked out to the bay. Yes, the ship—its name was the "Verone"—was still there. I thanked God in my heart. And the man was still sitting in the little boat with my baggage. He might easily have stolen it. I jumped in before he could help me, and sat down in his seat and took the oars and began to row and row.

"Here," he said, "I will do that."

"Oh," I cried, "let me help you. Then we can go faster. I am afraid the ship will sail without me."

But he would not let me help.

When we came again to the steps at the side of the ship, the whistle was blowing, and the ship was just ready to start. I climbed up with my suitcases. The officer—the same one that had sent me for the visa in such a hurry—was standing there and he was smiling. He looked at my papers again and said, "All right! Now you can go to America." And I smiled, too.

Then I found my cabin in the ship. And I went right in and knelt down by my bed and thanked my heavenly Father because He was so good, for I know He held the boat there so I could come to America.

For eight days the weather was very pleasant. I met many lovely people on the boat, and made a number of very true friends. Some of them still write to me. But as we came into the Atlantic Ocean, there was a bad storm. Even the officers thought the boat was going to sink, and the passengers were very much frightened. We all gathered in the lounge room, and some of them were counting beads and others were praying to pictures of Mary and the saints that they might be saved. I was sitting with them, but I prayed to God in heaven. I asked Him, since He had spared my life through all my terrible sufferings in Arabia and Turkey, please not to let me die so near America, where I had wanted to go so long. I promised Him if He would keep me safe, I would serve Him to the end of my life

in any way He might direct. In a few hours the storm cleared, and we reached New York safely.

Of course, there were no relatives to meet me there, and so, when the Travelers' Aid Society came aboard the steamer to see if there was anybody they could help, I was very glad, for I did not know just what to do. They took me through Ellis Island, where every immigrant coming into this country must give a good account of himself if he is allowed to enter. I was coming to school, so it was all right. These Travelers' Aid friends also saw that I got across the city of New York, from the dock to the railroad station, and there they bought my ticket for Washington, D. C. On the train I was with a German and his wife with whom I had become acquainted on the boat. They were also traveling to Washington. When I arrived there, the relative who had first suggested that I come to the United States met me and took me to his home. I was very happy to be in America.

Almost at once I went to work in a brush factory in Takoma Park, and continued to work there while I studied. During the years spent in Washington Missionary College, it was my privilege to live for some of the time in the dormitory, and thus be associated closely with the young men and women who were my classmates and friends. Of course, I had to work very hard, and even then I could not have met all my needs had not kind friends helped me very much, not only with clothes and other gifts, but with money.

When I had completed the required schoolwork, I

decided to go to the sanitarium at Orlando, Florida, to take my nurses' course. These years of training were very happy years, for was I not doing that which I had longed to do since I was a very little girl? They were hard years, too, for the studies were not easy for me, and I did not always catch clearly the English meaning of lectures and textbook assignments. But I worked just as hard as I could, and prayed that God would help me to pass the tests and become proficient in my chosen profession.

It was almost graduation time, and all the class were looking forward to their dreaded State Board examinations. Still, every one of us wished to be recorded as a registered nurse, and so in another way we were anxious to take them.

Then came to me a great disappointment. I learned that just after I had entered training, the educational requirements for entrance had been changed. Therefore the State authorities had refused me permission to take the State Board tests.

For a time I was discouraged. But after thinking and praying about it for several weeks, I went to our superintendent, Miss Kate Macey, and told her, "Now I write and speak both Armenian and Turkish, and I speak Arabian. Also I feel that my experiences have brought to me more in general education than the actual credits I have received in school before I came in training."

"Yes," she said, "I am sure that is true. How would it do for me to write to the authorities of the State,

and tell them that and ask them if there is not some way in which you can take the examinations and become a registered nurse?"

I heartily agreed to this, and she said she would write the letter that day.

When night came, I fell asleep and dreamed I was walking down the hall toward the superintendent's office, when she suddenly opened the door and came toward me smiling, and told me it was all right and I could take the State Board.

The next morning when I met her, I said, "O Miss Macey, I am going to take the examinations."

She looked surprised and said, "Do not be too sure, Miss Tavoukdjian. I have written, but you know I have no word yet in return."

"Yes, but I *know*," I said, "and I got up early and have already studied my anatomy book this morning." Then I told her my dream.

Some time passed, and the camp meeting came to Orlando. I was very busy substituting for this one and that one, as we all tried to attend as many meetings as possible. Therefore I had very little time for study. But I always carried a book under my arm, and whenever I had a few moments vacant, I studied. They all smiled when I would explain that I was studying for State Board. And Miss Macey always said, "Do not be too sure, Miss Tavoukdjian. You know I have no word yet."

To Do His Will

THEN one day I was giving a patient a quartz light treatment in her room. The telephone rang, and I learned I was wanted in the superintendent's office. Quickly I turned off the light and told the patient, "This is an emergency. I will be back very soon," and hurried to answer the call. As I ran I kept wondering what naughty thing I had done that I must be called upon Miss Macey's carpet. As I turned to go down the hall toward her office, the door opened, and she came toward me smiling the same smile I had seen in my dream weeks before, and she said, "Miss Tavoukdjian, your dream has come true."

We went almost at once to Jacksonville to take the examinations. There was no time left for me to get down to real hard study, and I was dismayed. I said, "Miss Macey, I *never* can pass unless the Lord makes a miracle."

She just smiled and answered, "Do the best you can, Miss Tavoukdjian. And He is perfectly well able to do a miracle, you know, if that is His will."

We were there having examinations for two days. I studied as hard as I could, but when there was no more time, I just told the Lord and asked Him to bring to my mind the things I would need to know. Then I went and wrote the best I could. When I was sure at last that I had passed in every subject, I was so glad!

A few weeks after taking the State Board examination, I went to Atlanta, Georgia, where the Orlando Sanitarium was operating a health extension service for the poor and sick and needy. We gave treatments and also studied the Bible with those who desired to learn about the truths of the third angel's message. I was just nicely started in the work when a letter came from the immigration officials in Washington, saying that I am in America only as a student, and now that I have finished my nurses' course, I must leave. Even though I received no salary, only board and shelter, for this extension service, still they would not permit me to stay in Atlanta.

Through the kindness of friends, it was arranged that I could come back to Washington Missionary College and spend another year in school. I was not in the dormitory, but worked in a near-by home for my room and board.

One morning early in December of 1931, I was in the brush factory where I had worked when I first came to America and to Takoma Park. While I was standing there talking to a friend, two strange men came in to truck away some merchandise. One of these men looked at me so long and intently that I was embarrassed, for I knew that he was noticing the tattoo marks on my face. Then he turned to my friends and asked what those marks were, and why I did not have them taken off. They explained that I could not have them removed because it was impossible.

Then he said, "I believe there is a doctor at

Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore who could take them off."

I, of course, heard this. "If there is any hope that these disfigurements can be removed from my face," I declared, "I will go to Baltimore and see about it."

For all the years since I had left Arabia those tattoo marks had been a great embarrassment to me. Everyone, when he first saw me, stopped to stare. If I went to the store, people looked and looked. If I walked down the street, the children would sometimes follow me. And the first time I went on duty with a new patient was always hard, for the patient would draw away, and did not wish to have me come near. Once some of my friends asked me to go to a circus, and I told them, "No, I do not wish to go to any circus. For if we go, my face will be a greater curiosity than the animals, and people will look at me and forget them."

Even before I left Turkey and Greece, I felt much ashamed of these tattoo marks, for everyone who saw me knew that I had been sold to the Arabs. And particularly whenever I met a Turkish soldier I felt like covering my face. I was afraid of what he would do to me. So you see why I was so very anxious to have them removed if it could be done.

I wanted to go to Baltimore that very day, but that city is some distance from Takoma Park, and I was busy at work and in school. Neither did I have much money for taking trips. I waited a week, and then some friends of mine were going there on business, and they asked if I did not wish to go with them and visit the hospital.

Of course I was glad to go. At Johns Hopkins Hospital I talked with the receiving nurse. She said that there was a doctor there who does that work, Dr. L. W. Ketron, but that I could not see him that day. It would be necessary to make an appointment. Of course, I did not know when I could come again, so I could not make such an appointment, and there was nothing to do but go home. However, I did ask Dr. A. W. Truman, superintendent of the Washington Sanitarium, to write a letter to Dr. Ketron, and explain to him about me, and ask him if he could see me the next time I could come to Baltimore. He very kindly did this.

One day, when I was doing the housework in the home where I earned my board and room, the doorbell rang. I opened the door. A strange lady stood there, whom I had never seen before, and she looked and looked at me, and I knew, of course, that she was surprised at my tattoo marks. I was becoming very much embarrassed, when she leaned toward me suddenly and asked, "Who did that to you?"

Before I could answer, the lady of the house was standing beside me. She explained about my face, and told the visitor of my hope that the doctor at Johns Hopkins could do something to remove the marks. The visitor was much interested. Also she was very kind. She told me that she drove to Baltimore from Washington almost every week, and would be more than glad to take me with her any time. I was very happy. God had once more answered my prayers.

The week before Christmas I went to see Dr. Ketron.

Of course he knew about me from Dr. Truman's letter, and he was very kind. He looked at my face and said, "Yes, we do that kind of work. Come in, and we'll try right now."

Dr. Ketron used an electric needle on the mark on my forehead. But when I went back for another treatment, he looked at my face closely and said he was not satisfied, that he feared the electric needle would not do the work successfully after all, but might leave bad scars. "But," he said, "there is a doctor, J. S. Davis, who is also connected with Johns Hopkins, but who works in the Union Memorial Hospital here in the city. He is a very wonderful plastic surgeon. I think he could do it for you and leave almost no scars. You just wait, and I will call him up right now, and will talk to him and tell him about you." I sat there in his office while he made all the explanations and also made an appointment for me to see Dr. Davis.

The next time I went to Baltimore, I went at once to Dr. Davis's office. He was expecting me. Carefully he looked at my face, and said, "I will try to do the very best I can. But you will have to be a very, very patient girl."

I did not think I would mind how patient I would have to be or how long it took, just so those horrid marks could be blotted out. We talked about what the charges would be. He knew something of my experience, and that I had no money to pay a large price, so he told me that he would do it entirely free of charge. I was very happy about this.



"It is my privilege to trust an all wise heavenly Father."

Then he told me to write to his secretary for a bed in the Union Memorial Hospital right after Christmas, and we would begin.

I spent New Year's Day of 1932 in the hospital. When Dr. Davis said I must be patient, he knew whereof he spoke. I am writing these words a year later. Three times I have been in the hospital, remaining there fourteen weeks in all, and undergoing four very painful and delicate operations. My doctor is a skilled specialist in plastic surgery, and his fame in this field is wide, but he has never before done work of *just* exactly this kind. However, he and his assistants have been very successful. I have been to the hospital for my last operation, and every disfiguring tattoo mark is gone. More wonderful still, there are only very slight scars remaining to show where they once were.

Never, so long as I live, can I forget Ward C in Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore, and the many kind friends among doctors, supervisors, nurses, and patients who helped to make my days there not only pleasant but a real benefit healthwise.

When my school closed in May, 1932, I again heard almost at once from the immigration authorities. They reminded me that I was in the United States as a student, and since my course of study was completed, and I had done one year postgraduate work, now it was most certainly time for me to leave the country. They also reminded me that it would be against the law for me to do any remunerative work, since foreign students are allowed to earn only their board and room.

I reported to them that I was planning to go away very soon. Doctors Robert and Carolyn Hillbourne, with whom I had become acquainted while in training at the Orlando Sanitarium, were doing self-supporting medical missionary work in Morocco, North Africa. They needed a nurse very much to help them, and I had just received a letter from them, asking if I would come and give this help. Not only could I do nursing, but I also had the language of the people there. They said they would pay my passage and promise me board and room and clothing, but that they could not give me a salary at the present time. I was very glad to accept these conditions, and made application for a passport. Then I hurried back to Baltimore, and to the hospital for another—and I hoped the last—operation on my face.

While in the hospital, I learned to my dismay that I could not be granted a passport. It seems that the paper from the Greek government on which I entered the United States in 1924 was not a passport at all, but only a "statement." Greece was at that time very anxious to get rid of Armenian refugees, and the American immigration laws were much less strict than they are today.

Long weeks were spent by my friends and the immigration officials trying to straighten out the tangle. But in spite of our efforts, it still seems that there is no legal way in which I can get out of the United States to go *anywhere* else. And neither can I legally stay here. The immigration officials did not know what to do with me, for I really have no country.

Then came the months—troubled, uncertain ones for me—when I lived under constant threat of deportation, hoping for the best from day to day. The authorities were kind and did their best to solve the problem of my future. But they were very much perplexed—and so was I! Also the Doctors Hillbourne were much disappointed as they worked on alone in Morocco.

At last I received final word from the immigration office that I must stay in the United States. I am not a citizen of any country, but a refugee; therefore I cannot have a passport to leave, neither will any country receive me without a passport. But now I may work for wages—if I am fortunate enough to find work—for the first time since I finished my nurses' course.

Now, perhaps, you wonder why I have told you this sad story of the distress and suffering which have come to my people.

I have told it because I am anxious to have you realize that faith in Jesus Christ as a Saviour and as a Friend, is an anchor which holds sure and steadfast in the fiercest storm. Truly, the hope of eternal life which He has promised to His children is a blessed hope, and I never forgot it in any of my great troubles. He helped me to bear them.

Not only so, but I know it is because of the protection of my heavenly Father that my life was spared. He has kept me in this world for some special purpose. My one desire is to serve Him faithfully, and do for Him just the work which He has for me to do. As I think of all He has done for me, it seems that I cannot love

Him enough, and that no sacrifice He could ask me to make in His service would be too great.

I tell you, He will be just as wonderful, just as true, just as loving a Friend to you, my reader—if you will let Him. He is knocking right now at the door of your heart, only waiting till you open it and say, "Come in." Won't you let my Saviour be your Saviour, too?

And so my story ends. What does the future hold for me? In this world of trouble, I do not know. But I do know that it will be all right. In the midst of disappointment and uncertainty and loneliness, it is my privilege to trust an all-wise heavenly Father. I am sure "He leadeth me," even though, at the moment, I cannot see just exactly where He leads; and as I bow in submission to His will, I am—

"Ready to go, ready to stāy,
Ready my place to fill;
Ready for service, lowly or great,
Ready to do His will."